



# Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary

## Campground Walks



These interpretation notes describes four walking activities, all of which can be comfortably done on foot from the campground. The activities include:

- Climbing Lookabout Hill
- Circling Lookabout Hill
- Home Range stroll
- Identifying Tracks

**Please Note:** The directions for the walks are given from the western campground only. If you are camping in the eastern campground please make your way to the western campground first.

### Climbing Lookabout Hill

**Summary:** From the summit of Lookabout Hill you can enjoy panoramic views, get a feel for the country, and identify some orienting landmarks. The walk takes about 60 minutes, plus viewing time. It is a safe climb with moderate exertion. A magnetic compass will assist you in identifying distant landmarks.

While Lookabout Hill is only about 50m above the campground, the vista is extensive. This walk is recommended on first arrival, and at sunrise and/or sunset.

Lookabout Hill is part of the Home Range. Its long axis is essentially W – E. The rock layers dip toward the north, and as a block it slopes away to the West, presenting its steepest face to the campground.



To begin the climb, walk to the northern end of the western campground and across towards an obvious cleft in the hill. A graded road will lead you towards the beginning of the footslope, or apron, which is treeless. Then climb straight up towards and through the cleft. It is layered into shelves by the rock strata. During rain, these shelves act as a series of cascading waterfalls. You will see the almostcubic dung (or scats) of the Euro (*Macropus robustus*), who uses these shelves as a lookout and to sun themselves. You can also find rock overhangs that they use as wallows and dens.

A thin layer of soil lies between bedrock and surface rock fragments and supports termite nests that are shallow and wide.

Under the covering rock fragments, the soil is shallow. Underneath the soil is solid rock. Even so, there are termites here. The termite nests are shallow and wide.

The climb ends in a shallow saddle. Bear west, and you will see a small cairn of rocks at approximately the highest point. From the cairn you can enjoy the 360° panoramic view.

Depending on light and viewing conditions, you will be able to see landmarks at the following bearings and distances.

Bearing (°)	Height (m ASL)	Distance (Km)	Landmark
300	684	5	Robbs Hill
30	738	17	Isolated Hill
75	803	14	Yaripilangu Range
90	732	5	Home Range
100	830	37	Siddeley Range
165	1267	65	Mount Liebig, Amunurunga Range
235	687	27	Andrew Young Hills, Black Hill

Depending on light and viewing conditions, you will be able to see landmarks at the following bearings and distances.

**Be careful not carry buffel grass seed on your clothing or shoes to weed free areas.**

### Circling Lookabout Hill

**Summary:** This walk follows a graded track that circles Lookabout Hill. The distance is about 4km and takes about 60 minutes.

This easy walk allows you to explore closely the vegetation that fringes Lookabout Hill, surprise small birds and lizards, and possibly encounter some of the larger fauna – dingoes, kangaroos and birds, or their tracks.

The walk passes through mulga woodland and spinifex calcrete plains. The healthy vegetation you see on this



walk has benefited from the run -off, as well as the nutrients eroding from Lookabout Hill.

## Home Range Stroll

**Summary:** This is a road walk along the southern footslopes of the Home Range, ending with a climb. It is especially good in the changing light of early morning. The (moderate exertion) climb gives sweeping views of Mount Liebig to the south. The duration of walk and climb is 60 minutes.

This walk has the same basic benefits as Circling Lookabout Hill: a close look at the vegetation as well as the chance of an encounter with some of the local fauna, either directly, or indirectly as tracks. It differs slightly because Home Range has somewhat greater grandeur, and the road is located higher up the footslope so the view across the countryside is more open and sweeping. In addition, the road is wide and sandy, forming an excellent telltale surface.

To start this Walk, leave the Campground by its entrance road, walking back until the garage and workshop comes into view. Then pick up the main northern road to the west. At about 300m from the campground, the road forks: to the left is the Mount Doreen road while the right is signed Freshwater Bore. Take the right fork. The road will arc slowly right as you pass through mulga woodland, and then head approximately east, with Home Range on your left and Newhaven Homestead on your right.

On this road you will see signs of an important component of the Great Sandy Desert system: termites. Every so often, the road grader has exposed a nest built by a colony of termites (termitaria) just below the soil surface, leaving them to slightly protrude above the road surface. The cemented sand walls of termitaria are extraordinarily hard, and thus, long-lived.

Most termite nests on Newhaven are underground, unlike the large castle mounds of Northern Australia. On the surface they appear as a bare patch of ground about one meter in diameter. These are known as pavement mounds. Termites are the most abundant herbivore of the deserts. In the Tanami Desert, termite mounds have been recorded at a density of up to 800 mounds per hectare. Often having hundreds of thousands of individuals in each colony, the biomass of termites is greater than that of any other animal in central Australia. They primarily graze on spinifex, storing it in their galleries to help them get through hard times such as after fire. It is easy to see that they play a significant role in the food web in this arid environment.

After about 30 minutes start looking for a good place to climb to the ridge top. The rewards are captivating views away to the South, in particular of Mount Liebig within the Amunurunga Range.

When you retrace your tracks, notice how the changed light conditions influence the colours of the rocks and plants. This is particularly so in the first hours after dawn.

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## Identifying Tracks

**Summary:** To become aware of tracks and tracking, and to gain an appreciation of the nocturnal animal traffic, prepare a section of road surface each evening to discover and identify the tracks you find the following morning. Be prepared for interest and surprise, as well as the occasional disappointment.

Each evening, at dusk, 'dust' a section, or sections, of the sandy road; where and how much is your choice. 'Dusting' involves clearing the road surface of all prior tracks.



In the early morning, survey your dusted sections. You can now sample, in both space and time; you can also go through the exercise of working out what is a track, and what type of animal could have made it. Barbara Triggs' book, *Tracks, Scats and Other Traces*, while being the best available, does not cover all the tracks possible at Newhaven. It is, however, a good start.

### Tracks



Goanna



Australian Bustard



Brush-tailed Mulgara



Red Kangaroo (walking)



Snake

*We hope that you have enjoyed these walks.*