

*H*ERITAGE
*T*RAIL



– STAR SWAMP –



108 Adelaide Tce East Perth Western Australia 6004
Tel (08) 9221 4177 Freecall 1800 644 177 Fax (08) 9221 4151

HOW TO GET THERE

Star Swamp Nature Reserve is a 100 hectare native reserve located approximately 15km north-west of Perth and is bordered by Marmion Avenue, North Beach Road, Hope Street and Beach Road.

The **Star Swamp Heritage Trail** is a 1.4km walktrail suitable for wheelchair users which highlights the swamp's natural significance and role in the history and development of the Stirling area. At a leisurely pace it provides an enjoyable 40 minute walk through a uniquely varying bushland ecosystem, with opportunities for birdwatching and picnicking. The area sustains a rich diversity of plant and animal life in tranquil settings, and a walk around Star Swamp provides a rewarding experience.

The Trail is accessible from three points:

1. South entrance - from the end of Groat Street
2. North entrance - from the end of Mary Street
3. West entrance - from Hope Street by the Swamp.

Following the trail route map, look for signs bearing the Heritage Trails Network symbol.

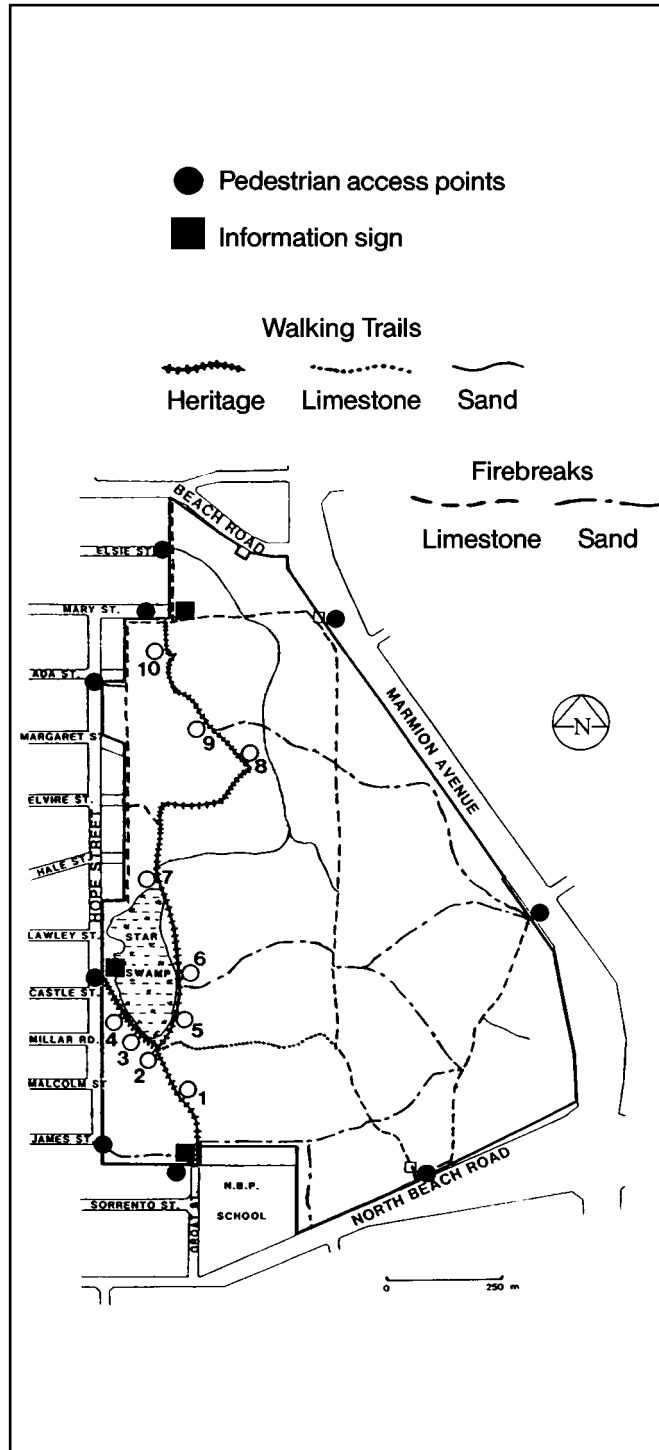
Please note:

Persons using this Heritage Trail do so at their own risk.

It is advisable to first check your current street directory before starting on the walk trail as map may be outdated.

Key

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Sanitation Disposal Site | 6. Quarry for Marl |
| 2. Orchards & Pastoral Leases | 7. Light-Horse Division |
| 3. Camel Quarantine Area | 8. Remnant By-Way |
| 4. Stock Route | 9. Aboriginal Camp |
| 5. Dairy Cattle | 10. Drivers' Tree |



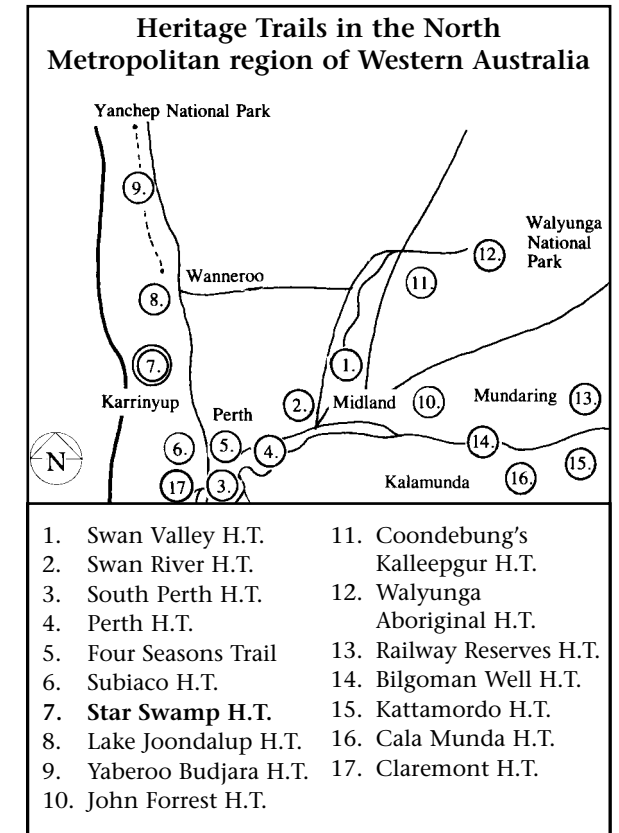
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE TRAILS NETWORK

History

The **Star Swamp Heritage Trail** is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation originally devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee (now known as the Heritage Council of Western Australia) in commemoration of the 1988 Bicentenary.

The Heritage Trails Network which was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program was established to provide the Community with a Statewide network of "Heritage Trails" routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

The map below indicates Heritage Trails in the North Metropolitan region of Western Australia.





Blackboys with marri trees in the background

Star Swamp, one of the best known and loved natural landmarks in the North Beach area, once formed part of a broad and extensive system of wetland swamps and supporting vegetation that made up the Swan Coastal Plain.

The precise origin of Star Swamp's name is unknown. Speculation that it may have been named because early maps showed it as an asterisk, or after a man called Star (or Starr), is not supported by research. The earliest known use of the name occurred on a lease application prepared by J.H. Okely of Wanneroo early in 1868. Later transferred to Edward Hamersley, the lease was surveyed by James Cowle in February and November 1869. Cowle's survey sketches show the extent of the swampland, a track approaching it from the eastward, and a well on the west bank.

Originally set aside as a timber reserve in the mid 1800s, the area around Star Swamp was first settled by pastoralists in the 1860s. Two families in particular, the Brockmans and Hamersleys, had considerable pastoral interests along the 'Old North Road' which extended from Dog Swamp to Walkaway, south of Geraldton.

At Mount Flora, north-west of Star Swamp, the Hamersleys built a sizeable home by the sea where members of their large family, as well as the elite of Perth, would congregate for summer holidays. Built in 1865, this solid stone house was commonly known as 'The Castle'.



Mixed banksia scrub along the trail.

During the cattle droving days of the mid 1800s to the early 1900s drovers frequented the area around Star Swamp, which was situated near the termination of the Coastal Stock Route which extended northwards to Geraldton. Camels and camel drivers were also a common sight after the opening up of the goldfields in the 1890s. At least one Afghan camel driver is known to be buried under the water tower on Mount Flora and an inebriated drover is said to have drowned in the Swamp when trying to cool off in its waters.

During the goldrush era of the 1890s the pastoral industry in Stirling began to decline and, with the importation of camels, an area around Star Swamp was turned into a camel quarantine station. The Hamersley home became the Castle Hotel and, being close to Star Swamp, was the favourite meeting place for thirsty drovers and Afghan camel drivers. The building was later demolished and the present Castle Hotel was erected in its place on the corner of Flora Terrace and Castle Street.

One former drover, Mr Ernie Brown (born in the 1890s), participated in the last cattle drive for the Hamersleys down the Coastal Stock Route. Mr Brown, recalled the wide variety of bird life attracted to the Swamp, and that it was one of the most peaceful and beautiful watering places along the route from Dongara to Fremantle.

The only way into the area in the early years was via a wooden block road built by convicts - later named Wanneroo Road - and then along a limestone track to North Beach. Another access was by a coastal bullock track made firm in sandy places by felled blackboys. As settlement expanded, numerous other tracks were developed, including some through the bushland around Star Swamp.



Star Swamp

After 1919, residential settlement began to overtake the area around Star Swamp as the suburban sprawl of the Perth metropolitan area continued to expand north and south of the Swan River. New roads were built and the neighbouring suburbs of Carine, Karrinyup, Trigg and Waterman became prime residential locations. The 96 hectares around Star Swamp have been preserved and retained as a nature reserve, and the **Star Swamp Heritage Trail** provides a link with some of the history of the swamp and surrounding region.

1. Sanitation Disposal Site



The old sanitation disposal site.

Prior to the introduction of septic tanks in the 1940s, a Roads Board contractor buried the rubbish and toilet refuse of local inhabitants at this site for 20 years. These locals included many unfortunate people 'on hard times' who lived in a tent village on the other side of North Beach Road during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

2. Orchards and Pastoral Leases

In the 1860s and 1870s, the North Beach /Waterman area was taken up as tillage and pastoral leases, many of which were held by the Hamersley family. The Hamersley holdings also stretched northwards up the Coastal Stock Route as far as Woodada Well. These included some hundreds of acres of freehold land and 32,000 acres of leases.

Still visible on the southern side of Star Swamp is evidence of land that was cleared and cultivated, often for orchards. The large olive tree on Hope Street (north-west of this point) is all that remains of an old orchard that used to exist here from about 1870 to 1900. As late as 1915 orange and olive orchards and a market garden still flourished on the western banks of Star Swamp.



The olive tree off Hope Street

3. Camel Quarantine Area

During the 1890s gold-boom, new discoveries were beginning to open up previously isolated regions of Western Australia. Camels were used extensively at this time and were imported in large numbers from India and South Australia for use in the goldfields.



Droving camels, probably to the quarantine station at Star Swamp, c.1900.

4. Stock Route

During the great droving days of the mid 1800s cattle were driven down the Coastal Stock Route from Dongara by drovers who stopped at wells and watering places, including Star Swamp, on their way to Fremantle. Although the main stock route terminated north-east of the present reserve, a subsidiary route ran along the east side of Hope Street by the swamp. It was during this period that the second and third generations of the Brockman and Hamersley families developed unsurpassed skills as stockmen, riders and hunters.

The original posts of an old stockyard, used for holding cattle and brumbies, can still be seen today on the north side of Star Swamp. In the same area a horse dealer used to cater for the needs of drovers. Wild brumbies were common in the area and even as recently as 35 years ago there was an annual roundup called 'Ring-In-Day'.



A typical horse yard, c.1900.

5. Dairy Cattle

The Swamp was also a frequent watering hole for dairy cattle from the local Beetles Dairy that operated from Okely Road. The cattle apparently led themselves to and from the swamp and local residents recall the sound of their bells in the bush. They grazed in this area until the original pastoral leases were subdivided for residential purposes after the dairy closed in 1915.

6. Marl Quarry

Marl is a clay-like sediment that was used for sealing newly-constructed limestone roads that formed part of the first housing subdivision in the area from about 1919. Marl was sometimes quarried from the Swamp and evidence of these activities can still be seen when it is at low level.

7. Light Horse Division

During the Second World War a platoon of the Australian Army 10th Light Horse Division was stationed at Mt Flora on coast-watch duties. The Division used the Swamp and nearby well on Hope Street as frequent watering points for their horses, which were kept at a yard where the corner of Hope and Hale streets is today.

8. Remnant By-Way

This section of track is all that remains of a major track that ran through the bushland in a southeasterly direction from the end of Mary Street to North Beach Road. It was used during the 1950s and 1960s before the construction of Beach Road and Marmion Avenue, mainly by timber cutters and local residents. School children, in particular, used the track to cut across the bushland.

9. Aboriginal Camp



A tree showing evidence of scarring by Aborigines.

In the vicinity of a wet depression to the west of here are trees that show evidence of scarring by Aborigines. The scars indicate that the trees were used by local Aborigines for making such items as shields or bark dishes - a reminder of Australia's original inhabitants who lived off the land and utilised it as a renewable resource.

Aborigines inhabited the south-west region of Western Australia in large numbers prior to European settlement, and George Fletcher Moore, an early settler in the colony, estimated that there were about 3,000 Aborigines in the

Swan River Settlement alone. Unfortunately, they were the first to bear the full impact of European society and their traditional ways did not long survive the diseases and overpowering dominance of the new culture.

10. Drovers' Tree

This large tuart tree is also known as the 'Beehive Tree' and marks the site where drovers occasionally camped during the cattle drives of the late 1800s and early 1900s. A number of subsidiary stock routes deviated from the major route which terminated north-east of the reserve. One of these is known to have passed in the vicinity of Star Swamp *en route* to Fremantle.



The 'Beehive Tree' where drovers camped during cattle drives around the turn of the century.

The **Star Swamp Heritage Trail** was developed by the City of Stirling in 1988 with the cooperation and assistance of the following:

- Star Swamp Management Advisory Committee
- Heritage Council of Western Australia
- Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (Community Employment Program)
- North Suburban Historical Society Inc.

Photographs

Page 5
Courtesy Western Australian Newspapers

Page 6
Courtesy Mrs Nancy Hamersley of Walkaway

Cover and Pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9,10
Courtesy City of Stirling



Tuart woodland at Star Swamp Reserve.

de Burgh, W.H.

The Old North Road
(University of W.A. Press, 1986)

Newell, L. (co-ord.),
Weller, H. (ed.)

Recollections From a Shoreline
(Artlook Publications, 1980)

