

Innes National Park

On the southern tip of Yorke Peninsula, Innes National Park encompasses spectacular coastal landscapes, a diversity of wildlife habitats and a wide range of recreational opportunities. Listen to the waves crash on the beaches and the wind whispering through the sheoaks. View the rugged coastlines sculpted by the Southern Ocean and wander through remnants of South Australia's mining and maritime history. Further inland, a chain of salt lakes occurs amongst the mallee woodlands.

The park comprises 9415 hectares of natural coastal vegetation, representing one of only a few pockets of significant vegetation on the Yorke Peninsula making it an important national park for biodiversity.

The summer months provide warm and sunny conditions for campers and beach lovers, while autumn has a calmness about it with mild weather and many still days that are ideally suited for bushwalking and sightseeing. Winter transforms the park into a fresh, green landscape with wild seas, and spring brings out the magnificent colours of blossoming wildflowers and casuarina trees.

Getting there

Innes National Park is located on the south-western tip of Yorke Peninsula, approximately 300 kilometres from Adelaide by road via Port Wakefield, Ardrossan, Minlaton and Warooka.

Park fees

Fees apply for entering and camping in Innes National Park. Day fees also apply to all visitors staying at privately leased shacks located within Innes National Park. On-the-spot fines apply to all vehicles not displaying a valid permit. Visitor fees contribute to managing and improving visitor facilities and services in the park for current and future generations to enjoy.

Park information, day and camping permits can be obtained from the visitor centre during opening hours or at self-registration stations located near the visitor centre and Gym Beach Campground. Correct change is required for self-registration. Alternatively you can purchase tickets using your credit card at the Visitor Centre self registration station.

Multi Park, Holiday and Annual Innes National Park passes can be purchased online or at the park visitor centre during office hours.

Aboriginal history

The Narungga people have lived on Yorke Peninsula for many thousands of years. Their lives revolved around the rules laid down in their Dreaming. They knew the land intimately – its physical features, animal and plant life and water resources. The Narungga nation was made up of four clans, the Kurnara in the north of the peninsula, Windera in the east, Wari in the west, and Dilpa in the south.

Today, the Narungga people continue to maintain strong cultural links to the region.

Farming history

European colonisation of the Innes area began in 1847 with land occupied for sheep grazing near Cape Spencer. Small scale cropping occurred increasingly throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Gypsum mining

Innes National Park takes its name from William Innes, who discovered commercial quantities of gypsum in the area in the early 1900s. In 1913 he set up the mining township of Innes where gypsum was produced until 1930. During the

boom phase the township boasted a population of around 200 people. Although isolated, Innes was completely self-sufficient, having its own school, post office, bakery, general store and tennis court. The Stenhouse Bay jetty was built to enable ships to berth and load the bagged gypsum.

Maritime heritage

Lying on the ocean bed off the coast of Yorke Peninsula and Innes National Park are the remains of around 40 shipwrecks. Many fell victim to the unpredictable storms that frequent the area.

The Investigator Strait Shipwreck Trail along the coast of Innes tells a tale of the tragedy, bravery and the final agonising moments before these ships sank beneath the waves.

Cape Spencer and West Cape have operational lighthouses to aid in the safe navigation of the hazardous waters surrounding the park. Both historic lighthouses can be viewed along walking trails.

Introduced pests

Several significant pest species occur in the park. Foxes, cats, rabbits and invasive weeds threaten biodiversity, with various controls being implemented.

Feral bees are attracted to water in this low rainfall area. Hives are treated annually; however, please report any active hives or swarms to park staff. Introduced kangaroo ticks are present on Yorke Peninsula. Further information is available at the visitor centre or online.

Geology

Over a period of thousands of years the forces of storm and wave action have eroded the crumbling cliffs along the coastline, exposing layers of our geological history.

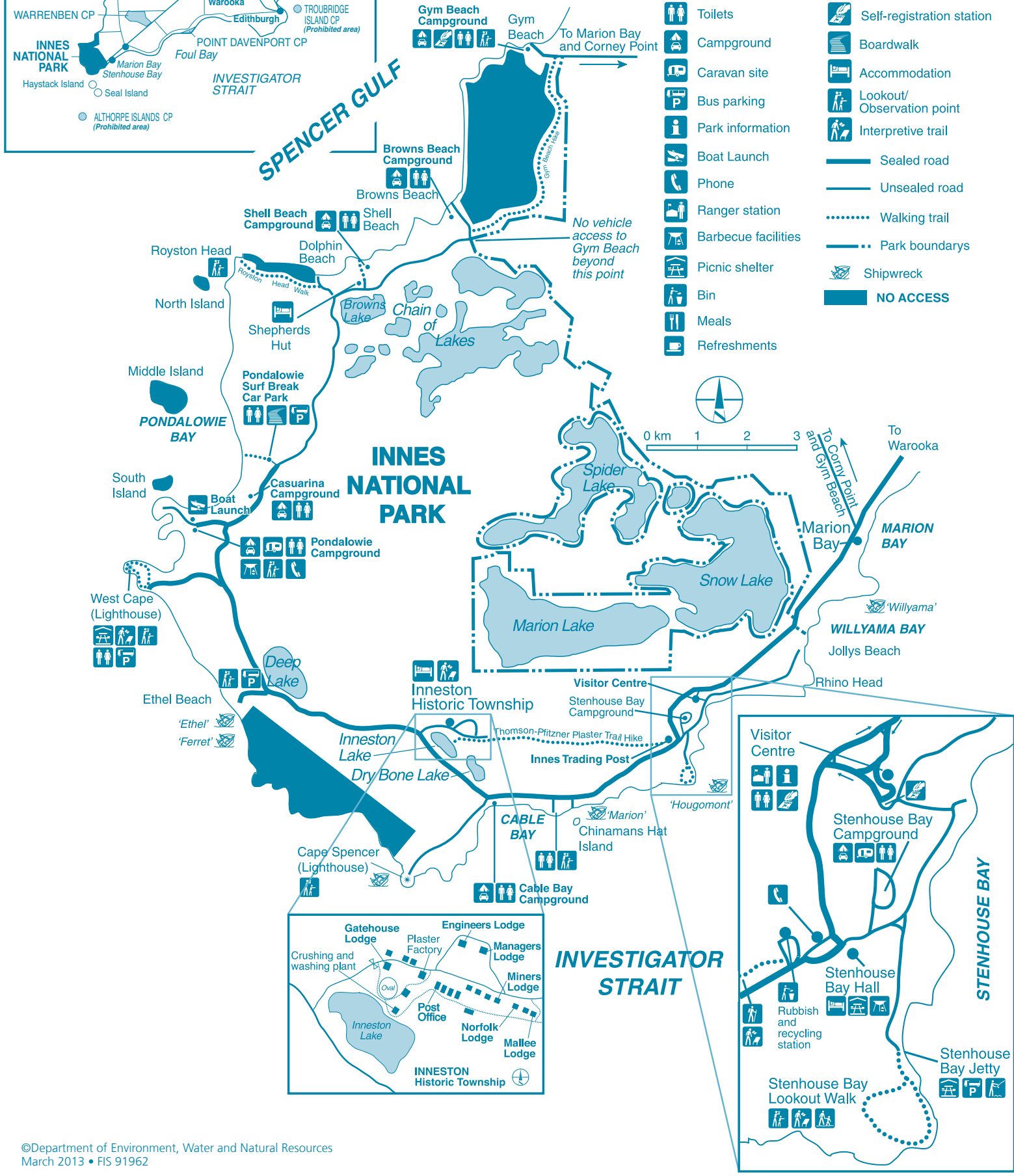
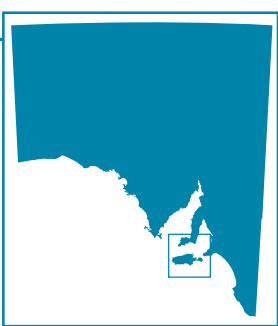
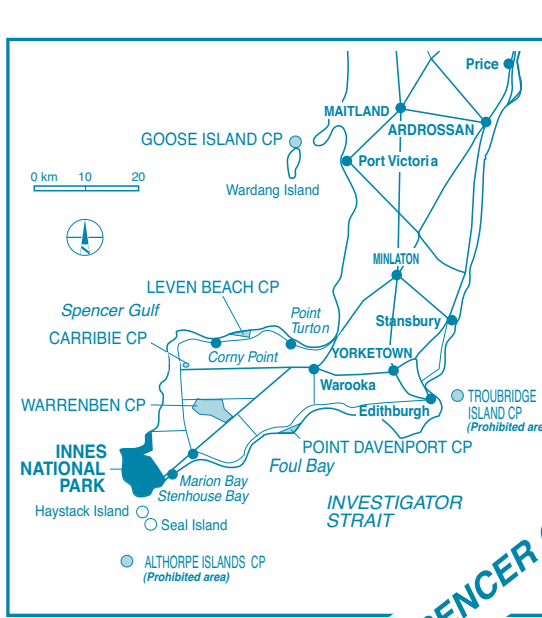
Innes National Park is home to very rare rock-like formations known as stromatolites. There are only three places in the world where they are known to currently exist in their present form.

Stromatolites are dome-shaped structures consisting of layers of blue-green algae (or cyanobacteria). New layers develop on top, closest to the light, trapping whatever silt may be present. Old layers underneath are impregnated with calcium carbonate and become fossilised. In this park they occur in salt lakes and have an obvious dome shape as a response to the water movement within the lake system.

Stromatolites date back to the Pre-Cambrian era and in other locations may be 600 million years old.

Friends of Innes National Park

The Friends of Innes National Park is a community-based group of volunteers who assist park staff to protect the natural and historic features of the park. Their work includes collecting seed, plant propagation, tree planting, controlling weeds, maintaining walking trails, bird surveys and restoration of heritage buildings. Further information on Friends of Innes is available at the visitor centre.



Things to do

The coastline surrounding Innes National Park can be dangerous. Visitors participating in activities near the coast or in the water should be aware of unstable cliffs, strong currents, slippery rocks, submerged objects and changing conditions. Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.



Many sites can be accessed by car with a short walk to areas of interest.



The impressive landscape of rugged cliffs, offshore islands, sandy beaches, historic shipwrecks, lighthouses, heritage buildings and diversity of flora and fauna present many stunning photo opportunities.



Whale watch from the lookouts along the cliff tops during the winter months at Stenhouse Bay and Cape Spencer.



The lighthouses in the park and on Althorpe Island stand as reminders of the rich maritime history of the area. These lighthouses are maintained and operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority as navigational aids.



Over 140 species of birds, many of conservation significance, find safe refuge and nesting sites within the park during certain times of the year.



Observe the colourful marine life around Chinamans Hat, Shell Beach and Pondalowie Bay. Alternatively, enjoy the beautiful sandy bays of Dolphin and Shell beaches; the park is truly a beach lover's paradise.



Surf in some of South Australia's best surfing locations and most challenging breaks.



A wide variety of fish species can be caught off beaches in the park or off the Stenhouse Bay Jetty. Fishing from rocks is dangerous and not recommended.

Please observe legal size and bag limits and take your rubbish with you.

The removal of shellfish is prohibited from offshore islands and reefs to a depth of two metres.

Camping

Experience camping among coastal mallee, wake to the carolling call of Currawongs, or listen to the surf crash onto the beach. Camping is only permitted in designated campgrounds, available on a first in basis. Bookings are not taken.

Schools and other groups planning to camp in the park must notify park staff and complete a *Trip Intentions* form. There are limits on group size and site availability.

Rainwater tanks are located at several campgrounds, however quality and quantity of the water cannot be guaranteed, so please bring your own.

Generator use is only permitted in the Stenhouse Bay Campground. Generators must be used in a clear area and be turned off by 10 pm. They must not be used on Total Fire Ban days.

Pondalowie Campground

Situated in the coastal mallee and sheoak vegetation are 52 designated camp sites consisting of 26 bush camping/tent sites and 26 caravan and camper trailer sites. This campground is only a short walk to Pondalowie Bay via the Fisherman's Village.

Camp fires and generators are **not permitted** at this campground.

Stenhouse Bay Campground

The campground has 25 camp sites suitable for large groups or caravans and is within walking distance to the beach, visitor centre and Stenhouse Bay Jetty.

Cable Bay Campground

Located adjacent the beach, this campground offers eight camp sites with great views of the offshore islands.

Casuarina Campground

This quiet, tranquil campground has seven camp sites with access to Pondalowie Bay and surf break via a walking trail through coastal dunes.

Shell Beach Campground

This quiet campground offers eight shady sites, within a short distance to a white sandy bay.

Browns Beach Campground

The campground has ten sites nestled amongst natural vegetation and bordered by a steep sand dune. A short walk will take you to Browns Beach, a popular fishing spot.

Gym Beach Campground

Accessed from the Corny Point Road, this campground is located off the northernmost boundary of the park and has four sites offering solitude amongst vegetation, coastal views and beach access.

Camp fires

Small cooking fires are permitted at designated camp sites. Camp fires are not permitted at Pondalowie Campground.

The collection of firewood is prohibited in Innes National Park and from along roadsides on the Yorke Peninsula. Dead trees and leaf litter provide important habitat for birds, small ground-dwelling animals and insects, and is in short supply in this rugged coastal environment. If you require a fire, wood can be purchased at the Innes Trading Post.

Always use existing fire scars and ensure the fire is out and cool to touch before you leave the area. Observe fire restrictions during the Fire Danger Season, usually between 1 November to 30 April. Remember that on days of Total Fire Ban all solid, liquid and gas appliances are prohibited.

The National Parks Code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions usually 1 November to 30 April. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas stoves.
- Camp only in designated areas.
- Respect geological, cultural and heritage sites.
- Keep our wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Be considerate of other park users.
- Sand boarding is prohibited. It causes severe erosion.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.

For more information

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
Yorke District Office, Innes National Park, Stenhouse Bay SA 5575
Phone (08) 8854 3200 Fax (08) 8854 3299

Regional Duty Officer 0417 883 678

Email DEWNRInnesNationalPark@sa.gov.au

DEWNR Information Line (08) 8204 1910



Email DEWNRInformation@sa.gov.au

www.parks.sa.gov.au

Walking trails

Innes National Park has excellent walking trails that cater for people with different interests and abilities. The park provides some of the best coastal views in the state, including the Stenhouse Bay Lookout Walk and West Cape Headland Hike. The Thomson-Pfitzner Plaster Trail Hike from historic Inneston township to Stenhouse Bay, leads walkers through sites rich in European heritage. Abundant opportunities exist to observe native plants and animals along the many trails.

For your safety and to protect native vegetation, please remain on formed tracks at all times. Make sure you carry adequate water and tell someone where you are going. Weather conditions may quickly change so dress accordingly. Don't forget your hat and sunscreen.

Classification	Trail	Time*	Distance
	Inneston Historic Walk	1 hr return*	2 km loop
	This well marked trail takes the visitor back to the early 1900s and the gypsum-mining era. Interpretive signs tell the story of the close-knit community of Inneston village. The lonely ruins stand proudly as a reminder of those bygone days. A very popular walk, starting from just inside the gate at the Inneston car park. Be aware of unstable ruins.		
	Stenhouse Bay Lookout Walk	1 hr return*	2 km loop
	This trail starts from the jetty car park and leads you around the cliff tops on a formed trail through low closed coastal heath. Nine lookouts with interpretive signs provide an insight into some of the natural and cultural history of the area. The spectacular views over Investigator Strait and the offshore islands are some of the best in the park and should not be missed.		
	West Cape Headland Hike	30 min return*	1 km loop
	A short hike taking in the spectacular coastal views of Pondalowie Bay, Wedge and Althorpe islands. The loop trail takes visitors past the fragile weathered coastal vegetation to the operational stainless steel lighthouse at the head of the cape. Exhilarating views of the high-energy coastline are another feature of this memorable hike.		
	Thomson-Pfitzner Plaster Trail Hike	3 hrs return*	7.6 km return
	The Thomson-Pfitzner Plaster Trail Hike follows the old wooden railway line that runs from Inneston to Stenhouse Bay. The hike begins just after the horse stable ruins along the Inneston Historic Walk at Inneston. Colourful interpretive signs take you back in time to relive those days of yesteryear.		
	Royston Head Hike	2 hrs return*	4 km return
	Spectacular views of the rugged peninsula coast and blue ocean. There is a fantastic lookout point from the cliffs at Royston Head with a tranquil beach below. Plant identification labels are displayed along the walk.		
	Gym Beach Hike	4 hrs return*	11 km return
	A diverse hike that takes in the unique flora and fauna and high sand dune areas between Browns Beach and Gym Beach. You may see a wide variety of birdlife and native orchids as you pass through the dense mallee vegetation.		

*Time is generously estimated for an average walking speed of 3 km per hour – allow extra time for resting and sightseeing.

Heritage accommodation

Short-term holiday rental is available at the historic lodges at Inneston Historic Township. The Stenhouse Bay Hall is available for group bookings (up to 28) and Shepherds Hut at Shell Beach accommodates four people. For more information see the *Innes National Park Heritage Accommodation* brochure available online or from the visitor centre.

Waste and recycling

Rubbish brought into the park is the responsibility of visitors; however waste disposal and recycling facilities are available at Stenhouse Bay. There are no waste collection facilities at campgrounds.

Flora

Around 333 native plants have been recorded in the park, 115 of which are of conservation significance, making up a diverse range of vegetation associations and wildlife habitats.

Innes National Park turns into a rich carpet of colour during the spring months when wildflowers and shrubs come into bloom. See cockies tongue (*Templetonia retusa*) with bright red flowers, coastal white mallee (*Eucalyptus diversifolia*) displaying creamy white flowers and the golden hues from the many wattles within the park.

Inland, the vegetation changes from salt affected, stunted growth to dryland tea-tree (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) and red mallee (*Eucalyptus oleosa*).

Please be careful where you walk, as many delicate herbs, grasses and coastal heath make up this unique landscape.

Fauna

Innes National Park is home to approximately 140 species of birds. Many of these species are of conservation significance, being listed as rare, endangered or vulnerable. The shy western whipbird (*Psophodes nigrogularis*) with a melodic chiming call prefers the coastal heath vegetation. The rediscovery of the western whipbird in 1962 led to Innes' dedication in 1970 to protect the bird's habitat.

The malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) builds a large mound-like nest in dense mallee. Seabirds frequent the coastal zones and skies of Innes National Park. White-bellied sea-eagles (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), pacific gulls (*Larus pacificus*) and sooty oystercatchers (*Haematopus fuliginosus*) are often seen. The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is sometimes seen gliding on wind currents.

Western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*) and emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) roam freely in the park. A wide variety of reptiles such as brown snakes (*Pseudonaja spp.*), sleepy lizards (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and eastern bearded dragons *Pogona barbata* are seen during the warmer months. Southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) pass along the coast from May to September and dolphins are regular visitors.

The tammar wallaby (*Macropus eugenii eugenii*) was once widespread across Yorke Peninsula. However, by the late 1920s they had disappeared from their entire former range. Tammar wallabies were reintroduced to Innes National Park in 2004.