

**Brian Everingham
Trip Report
August 2024
Volume 4
Exmouth**



Murchison Rose - *Diplolaena grandiflora*

Wednesday 14th August 2024

After the washing went in the line, we drove to the Exmouth Information Centre where we talked with the finance officer- a German - who promised to send us background information about the architecture about the building. Outside, proudly, are the links to this town and the American presence!



Inside, at the actual information centre, we met a delightfully cooperative young lady with beautiful sparkling eyes, lovely long lashes, gorgeous blonde hair and a willingness to please. We all decided she won't be in the job for long. Some lucky man is likely to want her! Mind you, she has enough up and go to go a long way without any help from a man.

We then drove past the "Commonwealth" lands, past the no photography signs, past the huge series of towers, past white domed buildings on the ridge. Within all that, within the electronic snooping powers of this outpost of American military reach, we know "nothing".



Our route took us around the Vlamingh Lighthouse, along the edge of Jurabi Coastal Park and on into Cape Range National Park. After a brief stop at the park headquarters (Milyering), we drove to Yardie Creek, parked and set off walking. My knee was aching so I covered it with Deep Heat and hoped for the best.

It freed up. Perhaps as a result of seeing not one but three views of Black-flanked Rock Wallabies and Flying Foxes. It felt even better after the scrambling rocky extension along the side of the Yardie Gorge and with wonderful views of several Osprey, two of which were in courtship flights.









Osprey

Having completed that walk, we drove back, drifted along the coast and visited Oyster Stacks, which was where I met a young lady called Chloe Deakin who is doing Honours research funded by Parks and Wildlife through University of Western Australia. Her study is human impact on the reef and the shore leading to an understanding of carrying capacity. I hope I can access her paper when it is finished.



We also looked in at Pilgramunna too and that's where the crabs shivered with fear from the threatening spear-carrying Amazon that is Lydia.

Our final stop took us to a view overlooking the SS Mildura, a shipwreck in 1907. It was carrying cattle. Most of those died but all crew were saved. The captain was suspended for three months. The boat stays stuck!



Thursday 15th August 2024

The UNESCO guide to the Ningaloo Coast that “the pretty girl” gave to us yesterday has told me that the delightful green flowering pea bush is called Green Birdflower (*Crotalaria cunninghamii*).

And all this fig trees along the walks is called Common Rock Fig (*Ficus brachypoda*).

Oh, the guide book also provides the local, Baiyungu, names. The Green Birdflower is Melham and the fig is Winyjirr. UNESCO and the Commonwealth and State governments deserve credit for these publications. And of course, Faye returned to that office today. That “pretty girl” has a name. It is Holly. It’s nice to give her a name. She becomes an individual.

Faye had the day in Exmouth, visiting several museums and art galleries, going to the harbour, looking at an Osprey nest and talking with locals. They all clam up at question three regarding the North West Cape.



Minus Faye, the rest of us headed to Mandu Mandu Gorge where we walked the rather tough 3km loop walk up the stony valley, then up a spur to the ridge and back via an up and down walk through a series of gulches. It was a lovely walk for Black-flanked Rock Wallabies and we had good views of five different specimens. Both morning tea and lunch were had under the shade of those fig trees. But along the way we saw some delightful plants, including Cape Range Grevillea (*Grevillea varifolia* spp *varifolia*)





Cape Range Grevillea (*Grevillea varifolia* spp *varifolia*)

Prior to the walk we stopped at Mangrove Bay where there was a bird hide overlooking a lake behind the dunes, fringed with mangroves. There were no birds on the water, though the mangroves did reveal Mangrove Gerygone and Mangrove Grey Fantail. On the beach we found Great Egret and Eastern Reef Egret.





After lunch we stopped at Turquoise Bay, one of the best beaches in Australia according to some sources. A quiet reef-lined beach, suitable for snorkelling, and with enough reef off shore to allow some lovely drifting with goggle and snorkel and fish variety to please the eye.



Having checked out the best inshore areas for fish, I then returned to shore and guided Suk Kwan and Joanne with how to use the mask and snorkel, where to go and, most

importantly, which way the current was running. The drift took people along the coast, to the north.

I then dried off while attempting to photograph one of the tiny Blue butterflies before we drove on, homewards.



Our final stop was at the lighthouse with sweeping views along both the coast and interior.





Or it would have been, except after we drove past two emus, I spotted Sturts Desert Pea (*Swainsona formosa*)



And then home, to shower, enjoy happy hour, Winnie's cooking and a relaxing evening.



Peaceful Dove



Crested Pigeon

Friday 16th August 2024

I sat out today. Faye and the girls headed off at 8.00, after I photographed a Peaceful Dove, and walked the Badjirrajirra Walk. Apparently, it was without the benefit of shade, relatively flat and considerably easier underfoot than yesterday's walk but I am rather glad I had the day off, even if Faye did spot a budgerigar enroute.

I had opted out because my water in the ear had not yet cleared and if the track had been steep and tricky I did not want to hold up people. But in some part of my thinking, I really just wanted some quiet time alone.

I walked the road and bush tracks down to the canal estates.



Most, apparently, go for approximately \$3 million and most are used as Airbnb.

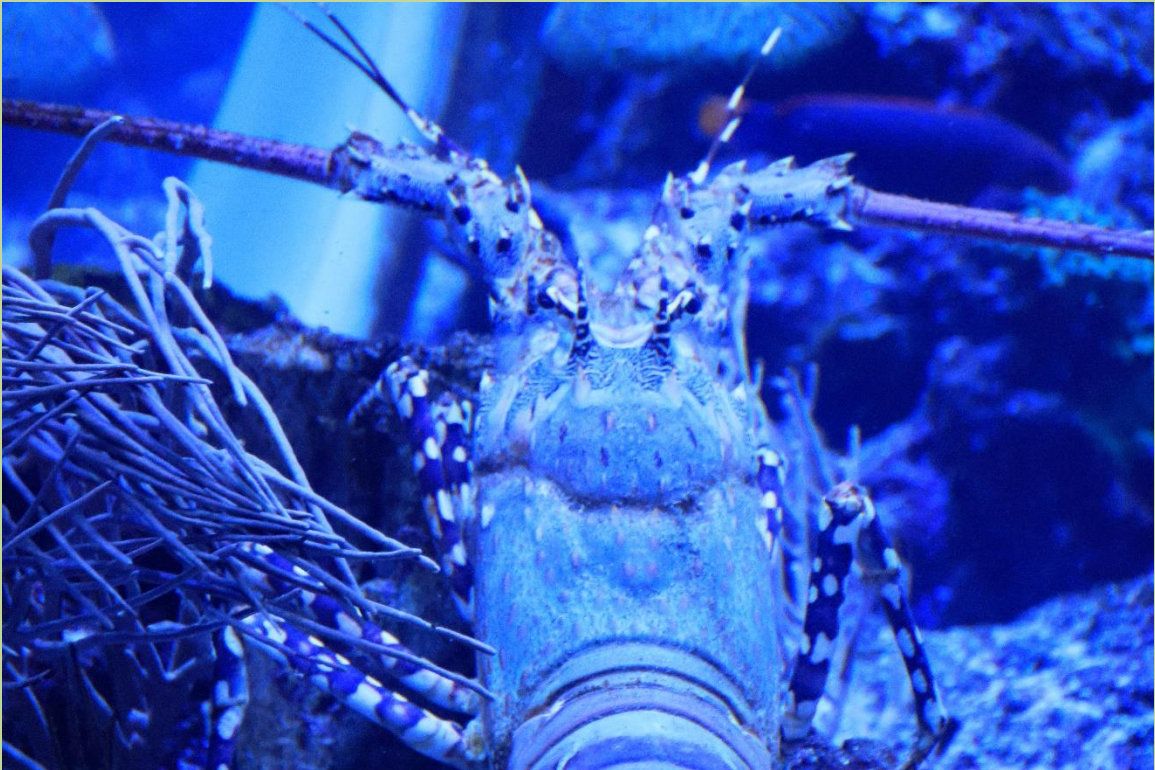


By then it was hot here in Exmouth and I was pleased someone stopped and offered me a lift to the centre of town where I had morning tea, walked around the shopping centre and then walked back to the Information Centre.

And entered the museum and aquarium. It was outstanding. I sat in front of the fish for more than 45 minutes, mesmerised.











A Moroccan soup for lunch picked me up, along with a lemon, lime and bitters, and I then headed home, mid-afternoon.

By the time I had washed the clothes, the others returned home. They came with an ice cream for me, did another load of washing and showered. Tonight, after dinner, we began to pack for the long drive tomorrow.

