

Environmental protection category - 3Mile Lagoon

3Mile Lagoon, situated adjacent to 3Mile Camp, at Gnaraloo Station (a wilderness tourism destination and pastoral station on the Ningaloo coast, approximately 150kms north of Carnarvon) has an unique and exquisite beach which is safe and offers fun for the whole family, including swimming, snorkeling and surfing. The clear blue waters of the lagoon are protected by the beautiful Ningaloo Reef and outlined with pure white sands and rugged cliff edges that give way to desert coastal vegetation.



3Mile Lagoon falls within the 3Mile Marine Sanctuary Zones in the Ningaloo Marine Park and is home to over 190 resident fish species. Gnaraloo supports the Ningaloo based research being undertaken by universities, DEC and other Government agencies and researchers who visit regularly to study the delicately balanced and diverse marine ecosystems that are on the doorstep of 3Mile Camp. A survey has recently been completed of the marine species distribution and life within 3Mile Lagoon. This study has led to the production of a snorkeling guide specific to 3Mile Lagoon. The guide identifies the 190 resident fish species that may be seen in the lagoon, with photographs and information on where to find them. It provides snorkeling tips and maps on tidal currents, best times to snorkel and where to go on particular tides, which will guide inexperienced swimmers and snorkelers. The snorkel guide includes a section on "Care of the Reef" to educate visitors on how to protect and preserve 3Mile Lagoon and the Ningaloo Reef into the future for all to enjoy.



The Ningaloo Reef and rugged cliff edges surrounding 3Mile Lagoon provides visitors with shelter from the wind. The lagoon offers safe swimming for the whole family with smooth, flat, shallow waters, only reaching to a depth of approximately 5m. The lagoon is a sight to be seen during peak winter months with many people enjoying the beach, walking, building sand castles, snorkeling, swimming, kayaking and other water activities.

Within 3Mile Camp, rocks have been used to demarcate all pathways to help encourage visitors to remain within existing pads and tracks. This has resulted in rehabilitation and a huge improvement in the native vegetation cover and growth within the campsite.

During the winter months, the beaches south of 3Mile Lagoon offer a variety of small to large powerful world class waves for surfers, from beginners to professionals when the conditions are right. Local and international surfers (travelling thousands of kilometers to be here) come to experience the extreme conditions and to chase the most memorable surf ride of their lives. There are 2 main surf breaks, namely Centre Peaks and Tombstones. The latter is named after a large rock located in front of the break that resembles a tombstone. Tombstones is one of the best left hander waves in Western Australia. Surfers can score a wave straight through all the sections giving them a ride of over 100m long. The barrels it offers on correct conditions, many say you could drive a bus through. During the

summer months, the area turns into a playground for windsurfers and kite surfers. The car park offers spectators good vantage points of all the action.



Gnaraloo lies within the Ningaloo National Heritage listed area and has significant rookeries of threatened sea turtle species. Gnaraloo commenced a turtle conservation program during 2008/09 to monitor and protect breeding areas of endangered Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) (IUCN Red List), vulnerable Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) (IUCN Red List) and vulnerable Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) (IUCN Red List). The program is managed by Gnaraloo with involvement of DEC and engagement of volunteers. The program contributes to protection of critical coastal habitats and endangered marine species, informed management activity and increased awareness and community engagement in conservation issues. The turtle program is supported by a complimentary predation control program initiated and managed by Gnaraloo with support from DEC. Some of these sea turtles nest within the vicinity of and nearby 3Mile Lagoon.

All visitors and guests to 3Mile Camp and 3Mile Lagoon are supplied by Gnaraloo with information on the beauty that awaits them when entering the area, including information on tides, marine sanctuaries, regulation and policies to ensure that everyone has a memorable experience. Most visitors are very receptive to this input and help to preserve this unique and exquisite area and lifestyle.

More information can be sourced from our website www.gnaraloo.com or our Environmental Advisor Karen Hattingh.

