

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CATEGORY – GNARALOO BAY

Gnaraloo Station is a wilderness tourism destination and pastoral station on the Ningaloo coast, approximately 150kms north of Carnarvon, with accommodation options for fishermen, surfers, local and international visitors seeking to experience outback coastal life. The twin crowning jewels at Gnaraloo are Gnaraloo Bay and 3Mile Camp / Lagoon. This application is made for Gnaraloo Bay. A separate application will be submitted for 3Mile Camp / Lagoon.



The Indian Ocean borders Gnaraloo to the west.

**GNARALOO BAY** is the picture on the postcard that you always wanted to visit. The ever changing clear waters of the Ningaloo Reef gently lap pure white beaches and sand dunes as the outback desert fades away to coastal vegetation to meet the sea. It is an unique and fragile beauty offering sanctuary to both sea and wildlife alike.

There are breathtaking views from every vantage point of the compass. The annual northern migration of whales to their birthing grounds in the Kimberley's is a sight not to be missed. Upon their return to southern waters, playful frolicking is often observed as mothers teach their calves the finer points of water breaching.



Gnaraloo Station is passionate in its efforts to protect native fauna, flora and marine life in the area. It is situated 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). Between the months of November and

April each year, female sea turtles struggle to heave their bodies up the beach at various points along Gnaraloo Bay, dig their nests and lay their eggs. Even more inspiring are the hatchlings fighting the elements, tides and predators in their endeavor to survive and reach the sea before crabs, sea birds, foxes, wild cats and other predators attack or devour them or their nests.

The turtle program is managed by Gnaraloo with involvement of DEC and engagement of volunteers. DEC provides scientific and technical advice and support to the program while Gnaraloo undertakes the monitoring program, the recruitment and management of volunteers, daily data collection, interpretation as well as end-of-season reporting. The Gnaraloo turtle program contributes to protection of critical coastal habitats and endangered marine species, scientific baseline establishment for 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.

Gnaraloo commenced a night monitoring program during 2009/10 to compliment the daily monitoring activities undertaken by the turtle tracker day team. The night program monitors nest emergence success rate, predation pressure on hatchlings as well as confirming the sea turtle species that breed at Gnaraloo rookeries. Gnaraloo is so committed to its turtle program that it funded Stage 2 of it entirely during 2009/10. The turtle and predation control programs are undertaken under guidance and co-ordination of Gnaraloo's full time environmental advisor, an experienced environmental scientist.



Gnaraloo Bay provides an excellent snorkeling location and an area for fishermen to launch their boats as they head out to non-sanctuary zones to fish. Driving on beaches and camping outside designated tourism nodes are not permitted at Gnaraloo. Gnaraloo conducts regular inspections to ensure compliance with these rules. All visitors to Gnaraloo Bay are informed that Hooter, the large resident cod, is protected as he likes to swim up to boats when they have returned from a day's fishing in the hope of being fed the odd fish or two.

Gnaraloo supports the work of the Department of Fisheries by providing fishermen, guests and day visitors with copies of the *Recreational Fishing Guide* (Finfish), *Species Identification Guide for the Gascoyne area*, the *Ningaloo Marine Park Sanctuary Zones* and a *Size Limit Guide*. Gnaraloo is in the process of developing vegetation management plans for day-use areas and beaches at Gnaraloo.

Not only do visitors appreciate being part of environmental protection efforts at Gnaraloo, but in turn they become self-appointed wardens and protectors of our pristine **Gnaraloo Bay**.

More information can be sourced from our website [www.gnaraloo.com](http://www.gnaraloo.com) or our Environmental Advisor Karen Hattingh.