



SUMMARY OF VALUES: COCANARUP - KUNDIP CLASS A RESERVE (Proposed)

Broad landscape and ecological values

1. The area contains some 65,000 ha of mostly intact and healthy native vegetation, supporting a diverse range of naturally functioning and resilient ecosystems which are largely free of dieback and are relatively undisturbed by human activity.
2. In a fragmented landscape the area forms a critical component of a substantial natural corridor that links the coastal vegetation of the Fitzgerald River National Park to the drier landscape of the Great Western Woodlands.
3. The area is underlain by a complex geology which has weathered over millennia to produce an unusual diversity of unique, attractive and culturally significant landforms in a relatively small area, including granite rises, greenstone hills, quartzite ridges, river and creek valleys, clay plains and alluvial flats.
4. The Phillips River valley is unusual in that it is a broad deep valley (as distinct from most other south coast rivers). It cuts through a complexity of geology, creating numerous biological niches and an array of aesthetically appealing outlooks.
5. The area is located in a climatic transition zone between the cooler, wetter southwest and the warmer, drier inland, which contributes to the remarkable landform and biological diversity.
6. More recent boom-bust weather cycles have come to characterise this region, impacting natural cycles, agriculture and community life - and the resultant complex of life systems is not fully replicated elsewhere in south-western Australia.

Specific botanical values

7. The extraordinary range of flora resulting from the mix of geologies and landscape features brings together species from the wheatbelt, goldfields, southern sandplains, south coast and quartzite systems, making it one of the most intense collections of plant diversity in south-western Australia.
8. The Ravensthorpe area generally is a convergence zone for many species of flora, especially eucalypts – and as a result it has the greatest eucalypt species diversity in Australia. This outstanding diversity is represented across the proposed Class A Reserve area.
9. The area contains the most extensive undisturbed stand of very old and large salmon gums in the Ravensthorpe region. Such stands are recognised to be extremely uncommon in the agricultural area and wheatbelt generally. The numerous hollows in this mature stand provide critical habitat for many species, including Carnaby's black-cockatoos.
10. The unusual diversity of plant communities includes a number of notable plants such as the rosey basketbush (*Calothamnus roseus* - PI), Kundip honeymyrtle (*Melaleuca sophisma* - PI) and Kundip mallet (*Eucalyptus* aff. *astringens*) all of which are almost confined to the proposed reserve, as well as a significant population of *Eremophila denticulata* which is Declared Rare Flora.

Specific faunal values

11. The area has been extensively baited for foxes over many years, which appears to have resulted in relatively low introduced predator numbers, contributing to the survival of the array of threatened species outlined below.
12. The area supports a range of endangered and vulnerable fauna, including the Carnaby's black-cockatoo (currently listed as endangered), the heath mouse (vulnerable), the malleefowl (vulnerable), the chuditch (vulnerable) and the tammar wallaby (vulnerable).



13. The area was a release site for the endangered numbat between 2006-09, and the local status of this population is currently unknown.
14. The area is known to be one of the three most important breeding sites world-wide for the endangered and culturally-significant Carnaby's black-cockatoo, with in excess of 150 nest trees currently mapped.
15. To ensure breeding success Carnaby's can range as far afield as 12 km from their nests to find food when raising young. These essential foraging zones cover a significant portion of the area in question.
16. The area provides crucial food, water and roosting options for the south-east coastal population of Carnaby's throughout the year. Large flocks of Carnaby's (in excess of 800) have been observed flying to roosting sites in the area, indicating they are accessing not only suitable roost trees but also critical fresh-water drinking sites nearby.

Prior recognition of natural values

17. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (and its predecessors) have long recognised the natural values of this area, beginning in 1974 when the Director of the Dept of Fisheries and Fauna recommended the Cocanarup Timber Reserve become a Flora & Fauna Reserve.
18. In 1974 the Conservation through Reserves Committee recommended that the Cocanarup Timber Reserve become Class A for the purpose of "Conservation of Flora and Fauna".
19. In 1992 the South Coast Regional Management Plan recommended that it become Nature Reserve, and it is still shown as "Proposed Nature Reserve" on the agency's own field mapping.
20. In 2012 the Dept of Environment and Conservation's "Fitzgerald Biosphere Recovery Plan" identified Cocanarup as one of five 'priority areas' in the Biosphere. It also emphasised the importance of connectivity of remnant vegetation and re-iterated the significance of this corridor.
21. The Ravensthorpe Range (immediately east of and adjacent to the area) and the Cocanarup Timber Reserve are both listed on the Register of the National Estate.
22. The Fitzgerald River National Park (adjacent to the south) is one of only 15 areas on the National Heritage List, recognised for its outstanding diversity of native plant species.

Cultural and community values

23. The area contains sites of national significance for both European and Aboriginal cultural heritage. In addition, physical evidence suggests there are many other sites and stories not yet fully documented.
24. Stories and information provided by local elders indicate the Phillips River valley was (and still is) of substantial practical and mythological importance to Noongar people.
25. The area hosts the Kukenarup Memorial, one of very few community-driven memorials recognising deaths that occurred among both Aboriginal and European populations during the settlement era.
26. Cocanarup Timber Reserve (within the wider proposed Class A Reserve) is largely based on the first European settlement between Albany and Esperance – the lease taken up by the Dunn brothers in 1868. As such, it is a unique and important historical site, highlighted by the still-intact original stone homestead buildings which sit in a cleared enclave within the Timber Reserve.
27. The local community has long recognised both the conservation and recreation values of this area, and value the place for its driving, walking, hiking, camping, nature-study and exploration opportunities.