

WESTERN AUSTRALIA THE WILD WEST SPECTACULAR

+ LOOKING FOR A TASTE OF THE 'REAL' AUSTRALIA? WHERE THE TREES AREN'T PART OF A 'LANDSCAPING DESIGN'? WHERE THE ONLY THINGS COLOURING THE WATER ARE FISH? WHERE IT'S HARDER TO FIND A NOISY SPOT THAN A QUIET ONE? IT'S ALL OUT HERE – UNSPOILT BEACHES, AMAZING MARINE LIFE, UNFORGETTABLE SCUBA DIVING, STUNNING SCENERY, BIG BLUE SKIES – AND FRIENDLY FACES.

Covering 2.5 million square kilometres, Western Australia is roughly equal in size to continental Europe. Spread between longitude 113 to 129 degrees, and latitude 14 to 35 degrees, the State has 12,500 kilometres of coastline. To the west it meets the Indian Ocean, in the north the Timor Sea, and the Southern Ocean in the south. With a huge coastline, hundreds of nearby islands, abundant and varied marine life, a mix of tropical and temperate climates and numerous accessible shipwrecks offshore, the diving and snorkelling adventure here is unbeatable.



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SCUBA DIVERS' QUICK FIX Around Perth

- > Jurien Bay Marine Park is famous for its sealions, limestone caves and overhangs.
- > Mettams Pool provides calm snorkelling, ideal for families and beginners.
- > Rottnest Island offers a range of snorkelling and deep sea diving, including 14 shipwrecks found along its coast.
- > Shoalwater Island Marine Park includes many islands with more shipwrecks, sealions, seagrass meadows, and reefs.
- > The Swan River has fascinating marine life and the easiest shore dives.

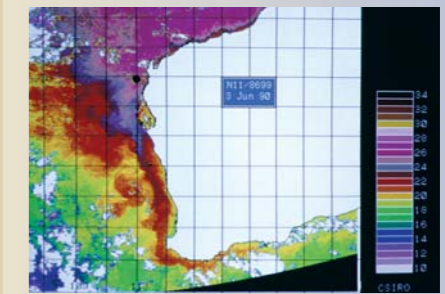
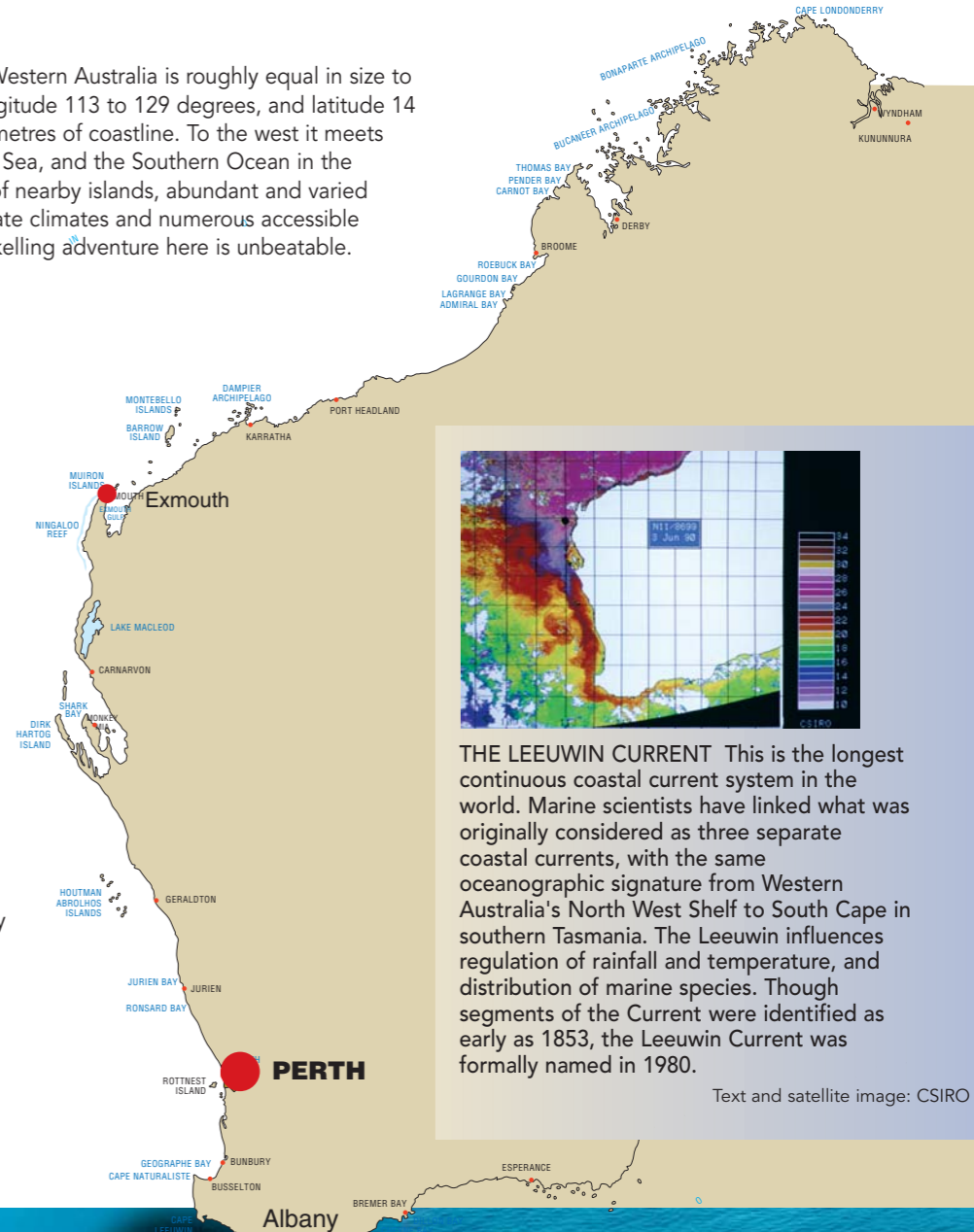
Regional Diving

- > The Abrolhos Islands near Geraldton offer some of the best dive sites in the state.
- > Albany on the south coast has

- Australia's largest prepared wreck, the HMAS *Perth*.
- > Broome is the launching place to visit the remote coral atolls of Rowley Shoal Marine Park.
- > Busselton Jetty is known as Australia's greatest artificial reef. The Busselton Jetty Underwater Observatory sits eight metres below sea level and gives a superb view of the marine life and coral.
- > Dunsborough is home to the purpose sunk HMAS *Swan* wreck.
- > Esperance is the place for seadragons and advanced diving on the *Sanko Harvest*.
- > Ningaloo Reef Marine Park between Exmouth and Coral Bay has the largest fringing coral reef in Australia, a 260 kilometre spectacle of colour and unspoiled diversity. With more than 500 species of fish, it's ideal snorkelling and diving. Between March and June, visitors can swim with giant whale sharks. Rare turtle species hatch here in late January and February.

AND WHILE YOU'RE OUT THERE

- > For the most breathtaking sunsets visit Cable Beach in Broome, one of the most beautiful stretches of coast on earth.
- > Western Australia surf is famous for its variety and quality. With so many reefs and islands just off the coast, there's literally surf from top to bottom. You could start with Margaret River, the undisputed surf capital of WA.
- > Fishing is Western Australia's largest recreational activity and almost everyone living here has access to a boat of some sort. There's barramundi in the north, crayfish in the south and everything in between.
- > Boating and Cruising – You can sail, kayak, canoe or motor your way along the coast, and explore the myriads of islands, bays and rivers. Where else would you launch from but Perth's mighty Swan River?
- > And inland is some of the most spectacular terrain you'll ever see.



THE LEEUWIN CURRENT This is the longest continuous coastal current system in the world. Marine scientists have linked what was originally considered as three separate coastal currents, with the same oceanographic signature from Western Australia's North West Shelf to South Cape in southern Tasmania. The Leeuwin influences regulation of rainfall and temperature, and distribution of marine species. Though segments of the Current were identified as early as 1853, the Leeuwin Current was formally named in 1980.

Text and satellite image: CSIRO

For the full story on this great region visit www.westernaustralia.com

