

Yalgorup National Park

Yalgorup National Park is a 12,888 ha in area. It is a narrow coastal strip of land that includes Lake Clifton, Lake Preston and seven other minor lakes.

Flora includes coastal heaths, tuart woodlands, paperbark swamps, sedge swamps and mixed eucalypt woodlands.

Fauna within the park includes Grey Kangaroo, Brush Wallaby, emu, Whistling Kite, Horny Grebe, Black Swan, Rock Parrot, Sacred Kingfisher, Red Kneed Dotterel, Red Capped Dotterel and Hooded Dotterel.

Lake Clifton is the home of the Thrombolites (See over).

The Yalgorup Lakes System is part of Site 482 listed under the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#). **This convention helps protect “Wetlands of International Significance”.** This puts Yalgorup into the same category as Kakadu National Park!!

The wetlands of the Yalgorup Lakes System are the breeding, moulting and feeding grounds for thousands of endemic and migratory birds each year. Just a few of those that feed each year before migrating north are:- Greater Sand Plover, Red-necked Stints, Common Greenshanks, Grey Plovers and Curlew Sandpipers. Indigenous species come to Yalgorup every year to feed and breed. These include:- Australian Shelducks, Banded Stilts, Red-capped Plovers, Pacific Black Ducks and Hooded Plovers. Hooded Plovers are a globally threatened species, which breed along the shores of most of the lakes. Over 60 different species of birds were recorded in and around the Lakes in one year.



(Photos courtesy Peel –Harvey Catchment Council)



The Thrombolites of Lake Clifton

The Thrombolites of Lake Clifton represent some of the earliest forms of life on earth—living, breathing rock-like structures—more than 2000 years old.

The Thrombolites reef at Lake Clifton is the longest in the southern hemisphere—15km in length and widens to almost 120m in parts. **Thrombolites known as “Living Rocks” are microbial formations that have a clotted internal structure.** They grow less than 1mm a year. Thrombolites are rock-like and built by micro-organisms. When these microbes photosynthesize, they precipitate calcium carbonate (limestone), which creates the dome shaped Thrombolites.

350 million years ago Thrombolites were the only known form of life on Earth. Microbes found in Thrombolite formations are believed to be responsible for the first oxygen production which allowed life to exist on earth. The Thrombolites of Lake Clifton are thought to be more than 2000 years old.

The Thrombolites are protected under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. In December 2009 the Thrombolites were listed as critically endangered under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Visit Lake Clifton in the summer months for optimum visibility of the Thrombolites when the water level is low. The winter period will provide a beautiful view of the colours and splendor of these ancient, living rocks, submerged beneath the water.

You can see the Thrombolites from the viewing platform at the end of Mt. John Road in Lake Clifton, just 20minutes south of Mandurah.



(Courtesy Peel-Harvey Catchment Council)

The Aboriginal Story of the Formation of Lake Clifton

In the *nytting* (beginning) the Aboriginal people who lived in this region had no fresh water and the land was dry and hard. They needed fresh water to set up their *mia mia's* (camps) so they could live in harmony with the *boodja* (land). The Elders went down to the sea and they prayed to their creator for the water to come fresh. Their creator came out of the *wardarn* (ocean) in the form of a snake: the *Waugal*. She pushed through the sand dunes, along her path creating the inlet of *Mandja* (Mandurah).



The *Waugal* slithered back and forth and carved out a hollow which formed the *Djilda* (Peel-Harvey Estuary) and here she laid her eggs. She curled her body around her eggs to protect them. In time, some of the eggs hatched and young began to appear. Then they scattered carving out the major *bilya* (rivers): *Yoordinggaap* (Harvey); *Bilya Maadjit* (Murray); and *Waangamaap* (Serpentine).

The little ones, they were fat, and kept going east up to the hills, forming rivers and swamps. **They came to be tired and starved as they didn't stop to eat.** The grooves they cut became thinner and thinner as they were further from their birthplace. When their end came they died and went underground, forming subterranean springs on their way back to their heaven, the *wardarn* (ocean). Left behind them, were water supplies fresh and plentiful and water was restored to the land once more.

But the *Waugal*, she went in search of her young, she went underground and came up here at *Noorook Yalgorup* (Lake Clifton) and then at Lake Preston. She kept going, looking for them, all the way to the Leschenault Estuary at Australind. She never found her babies, instead she burrowed down in the *Djilda* (Peel-Harvey Estuary) and where her mouth was, a spring of fresh water comes and it is a place where fish gather and *Nyungars* (local Aboriginal people) can catch them. And the *Waugal*, she is still there waiting for her young to return.

The Aboriginal people always live by the rules of the *Waugal*, and hold her in highest reverence for she created the waterways that are their lifeblood.

(Courtesy Peel-Harvey Catchment Council)

Lake Clifton and Herron Information Brochure



A Brief History of Lake Clifton



Lake Clifton is a small rural/rural residential area. At the 2011 census, Lake Clifton had a population of 406.

The area's first European settler was John Fouracre, who established a wayside inn and changing station at Wellington Location 205 in 1854.

The townsite of Lake Clifton was developed in 1920 as a result of the WA Portland Cement Co. seeking to mine a shell deposit for limestone. A railway to Waroona was built to transport the shells. The town was eventually named Lake Clifton, as was the lake, in 1923. For a short period it was a busy company town.

Some time in 1922 or 1923, a rotary kiln was constructed to burn the shells to lime at the site. This operated for just 2 weeks and was then closed down as it did not work successfully. The mine closed at the end of 1923 and the railway was taken away to make the Lake Grace-Newdegate rail line.

The rotary kiln itself has been removed but the brick structure that was used to support it is in very good condition. Traces of the railway line can still be found, particularly on the old Lake Clifton Townsite, but all that remains are some elevated areas which once supported the track.

A Brief History of Herron

James and Isabella Herron emigrated from Ireland in 1853. James joined the police at Guildford and was later transferred to Pinjarra. The family also employed convicts as many families did at the time.

In 1864 the family moved to a 70acre block at The Coast, Lake Clifton. This was near the track from Mandurah to Australinda at the time. The Herron family moved from Lake Clifton to Coolup around 1893. Coolup had better soils and was less isolated. The family has a summer house at the northern end of Lake Clifton called Greenwood. The family would move their stock from the coast to Coolup across the sand bar that used to form at Island Point on the Harvey Estuary. The gold rush of the 1890's produced an economic boom enabling the family to send excess milk and cream to Perth for sale.

Descendants of the Herron family include a former Premier of Western Australia, Sir Ross McLarty.



Springtime Flora of Lake Clifton and Herron

Thysanotus sp. Fringe Lily



Cowslip Orchid *Caladenia flava* subsp. *flava*



Templetonia retusa Cockies' Tongues



Caladenia sp. Spider Orchid

The Lake Clifton-Herron Progress and Sporting Association (Inc.)

Lake Clifton and Herron form a natural community. Residents share the same issues of managing acreage in an environmentally sensitive area. The Lake Clifton-Herron Progress and Sporting Association (Inc.) (LCHPSA) is dedicated to creating a cohesive community with a developed sense of identity and purpose. We also help foster an environment that promotes growth, self-worth and social development.

The LCHPSA welcomes new members and community attendance at their bi-monthly Community Meetings. Look for details on the Website www.lakeclifton.com.au, in the Community Newsletter and on the Community Noticeboards in the area.



(Photocopied courtesy of Dr. Kim Hames, MLA Member for Dawesville)

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