

Code Off-road

Drive Lightly

Coastal ecosystems are some of our most fragile, and need special care when visiting them. Beach driving especially has the potential to impact negatively on animals such as shorebirds, whose nests and young are difficult to see and who may be resting after long migration flights. And the beach is not a sandy desert! The weight of a vehicle not only squashes the sand, but also many small marine creatures which are important to the beach ecosystem and are food for larger beach animals and fish species.

Drive Lightly with **The Code Off-road** and respect our coastal environment:

Stay on Track – There’s no need to deviate when heading to the beach; damage to vegetation and soils can be irreversible, and once a new track is made, other vehicles will follow which causes further damage.

Dogs Are Only Man’s Best Friend – Dogs are best left at home as they can disturb or kill wildlife, spread disease and can be frightening to other people, especially children. Dogs and other pets are not permitted at any time in national parks and 1080 poison is regularly laid, which is also fatal to dogs. When driving in areas where domestic animals are allowed, please keep your pet under control at all times.

Watch for Wildlife – Most of us would rather watch wildlife behaving naturally than watch it disappear under the wheels of an off-road vehicle. Keep your eyes peeled for reptiles basking at the side of the track, birds, kangaroos etc and bring binoculars, there’s heaps to see!

Picnic In, Pack It Out – It’s pretty simple with rubbish, what goes in must go out again! It’s not acceptable to bury or burn rubbish, or to throw food scraps, bait bags etc into the bush. Minimise packaging every time, carry rubbish bags in your vehicle and be prepared to carry out the rubbish of other, less thoughtful people.

Toilet Training – Practice good personal hygiene in the bush and prevent the spread of nasties such as *Giardia* and *Gastroenteritis* as well as stinky surprises for other travellers. Carry a trowel to bury solid waste and toilet paper at least 100m from any watercourse and at least 30cm deep.

Deliver Us From More Dieback – Many of our unique plant species including coastal heaths are susceptible to *Phytophthora dieback* (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) – plant death caused by a microscopic soil-borne water mould. The pathogen kills many coastal species and vegetation types. It is spread by the transportation of infested soil and plant material. There are many areas that are free of Dieback and you can help stop its spread if you:

- ▶ clean any mud and soil off your vehicle before and after your trip;
- ▶ avoid travelling in wet and mud conditions;
- ▶ keep to established tracks and roads and respect track closures.

Don't spread the red

dieback infested

dieback free

Be clean in the green



A GUIDE TO SAFE | SPECTACULAR | RESPONSIBLE OFF-ROAD DRIVING ON THE WA SOUTH COAST

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Damaging, Delinquent & Downright Dangerous.

Did you know that although road licensed vehicles (4WD and motorbikes) are permitted in most areas, off-road vehicles (e.g. quad bikes and trail bikes) are only permitted to be ridden in designated areas and private land with the owner’s permission?

Most of us are responsible drivers but there is a small minority who let the side down. All normal road rules apply when driving in off-road areas, and examples of bad behaviour which will get you into trouble include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Damage to vegetation and landscape
- ▶ Disturbance to animals
- ▶ Damage to signs, fences, bollards
- ▶ Driving in a protected area with a domestic animal (e.g. dog, cat, horse) and / or firearms.

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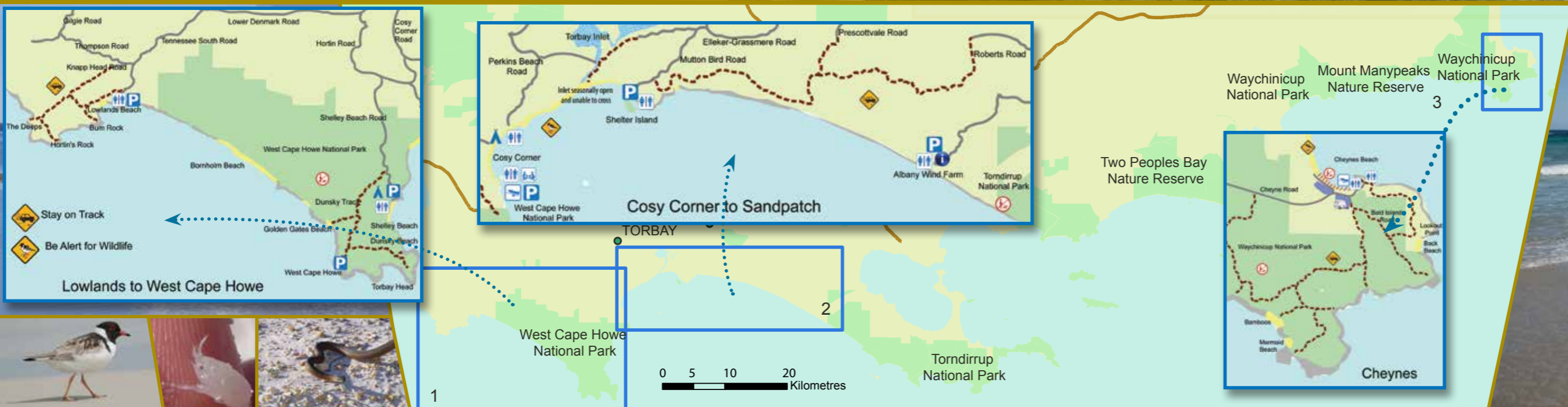
Be a Champion Camper –

- ▶ Always plan to camp in designated camping areas and do not create new camp sites, this kills vegetation and damages soil.
- ▶ Generators disturb the peace of others so keep their use to a minimum.
- ▶ Coastal vegetation takes a long time to grow and is easily damaged - try to take a fuel stove instead of having a campfire and bring any firewood with you rather than collecting it nearby. Fires are only permitted in designated fireplaces, keep it small and make sure it’s properly extinguished after you leave. Remember, fires are not permitted on high or extreme fire danger days, and are not permitted at any time within certain Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) managed lands. Always check with the land manager first.

Contact details:

In national parks, call the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) Ranger, and on other public land call either the Shire Ranger or the WA Police.

WA Police: 131 444
DPaW: 08 9840 0400 (Frankland District)
 08 9842 4500 (Albany District)
Shire Rangers: 08 9848 0300 (Denmark)
 08 9841 9349 (Albany)



- 2WD Access
- - - 4WD Access
- P Parking
- Toilets
- Information
- Commercial Caravan Site/Camping
- Campsite
- Boat Launch
- Dog Exercise Area
- Dogs Prohibited
- Picnic Area
- Vehicle Exclusion Zone
- Settlement Area
- Be Alert for Wildlife
- Stay on Track





Code Off-road - Trip Preparation!

KEEP SAFE WITH THE CODE OFF-ROAD AND THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

Maintenance – Make sure that your vehicle is maintained in good working order, and check it over before setting out.

Supplies – You might be loaded up with fishing gear, but remember to make room for basic supplies such as water, food, first aid kit, extra fuel as well as vehicle maintenance equipment.

Recovery - The kit essentials for a 4WD would include:

- ▶ air compressor with gauge
- ▶ tow rope, make sure there are strong attachment points on your chassis – not tiedown points
- ▶ tyre repair kit and spare tyres
- ▶ jack and a jack plate
- ▶ bow or 'D' shackles
- ▶ vehicle tool kit
- ▶ rigger's gloves
- ▶ a shovel
- ▶ tarp



You don't need to be a specialist mechanic to operate a 4WD, but you will need a few basics to ensure that you and your vehicle get home safely.

Photo Credits: Gareth Stoakes, John Tucker, Albany 4WD Club, South Coast NRM, Geoff Taylor.



TAKE THE 'CODE OFF-ROAD' WITH YOU ON YOUR NEXT TRIP

Don't let this be you!



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Safe Driving...

Training – Consider undertaking 4WD training through a registered provider or joining a 4WD club – there are several in Perth as well as in other major Australian centres. Guaranteed fun will be had and you'll pick up great driving skills for life.

Tyre Pressures – A reduced tyre pressure maximises the tyre footprint for increased traction. It is essential that tyre pressure is reduced before entering sandy tracks and beaches to 12-15psi (check manufacturer's specifications for your vehicle). Make sure that your driving speed is also reduced to remain in control with deflated tyres, and that they are reinflated when you encounter hard sand or surfaces. Always carry an air compressor with a gauge for this purpose.

Engage 4WD – Keep things under control by engaging 4WD and locking hubs before entering sandy tracks or beaches. Generally, in sandy conditions second or third gear in low range will see you through, but when engaged in 4WD avoid sharp turns or sudden braking to avoid losing momentum.

Visibility – Sun glare and mist may reduce visibility on beaches, and off-road tracks are full of blind corners and hill crests. Play it safe; drive slowly, respect conditions on the day and avoid driving at night.

Passing Points – Are there to enable vehicles to pass without damaging vegetation. Please use them, and resist the temptation to create new ones.

Safe Travel – Always drive slowly on coastal off-road tracks (< 40km/hr), and keep speed on beaches to 20km/hr; enjoy your drive and the surroundings! The environment will thank you for it and you have time to make decisions. Driving with your seat belt on is not just a legal requirement; it helps you to control the vehicle on uneven bumpy ground.

Up the Creek Without a Paddle – River and creek crossings can look deceptively shallow. If in doubt, always stop and walk the crossing, if you can't walk across don't attempt to drive. Wheel axle height is a good guide as to how deep you should go.

Beach Etiquette – When driving on the beach, aim to travel at, but not above the high tide mark, and check tidal and weather conditions on the day. Avoid driving over piles of seaweed, be especially careful on high-energy beaches and remember all beaches are different.

Help!

Get me out of here – Always tell someone where you are going and your expected return time, and arrange to travel with another vehicle if possible. Although it's essential to carry a mobile phone, remember that there may be no signal in coastal areas – do not rely on it. Consider a satellite phone if you are going to be in remote areas for extended periods, or VHF or UHF radio. If you become stuck or break down you are generally safer staying with your vehicle until help arrives, but if you have to hike out avoid walking in the heat of the day and leave a note in your vehicle of your intentions.

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Everybody loves the stunning scenery, magnificent beaches and great outdoor activities on offer along the WA coastline.

Responsible and skilled driving minimises degradation to coastal ecosystems, accidents, and the spread of *Phytophthora* dieback.

It is vital you know how to drive safely and lightly to protect yourself and this fragile environment, and ensure the South Coast remains just as magical in years to come.