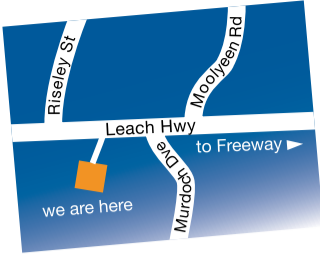


Location

Access to the Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail can be gained from Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre on Leach Highway, between Riseley Street and Murdoch Drive, Winthrop.



City of Melville
Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre
Leach Highway, Winthrop.

Phone: 9364 0791

Web: www.melvillecity.com.au/pineylakes

Acknowledgements

The City of Melville acknowledges that this is a traditional Noongar women's site.

For their advice, support and assistance the City of Melville would like to thank Djidi Djidi Aboriginal Women's Group, Gail Beck, Marissa Verma, Brenda Hill, Piney Lakes Environmental Education Centre Heritage Trail Volunteers, West Leeming Primary School, Emanuel Catholic College and North Lake Senior Campus student volunteers.

Artwork Credits

The artwork along the Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail was produced by Brenda Hill, Else Woods, Laurel Nannup, Tania Spencer, Jason Hirst and Kath Wheatley.

Printed on 100 per cent recycled paper.



Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail

Please keep this Trail guide or return it for re-use.

Welcome

Welcome to the Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail

The Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail runs through an area of Piney Lakes Reserve which was utilised by Noongar women throughout the year, over the Noongar six seasons. The Noongar six seasons each represent a different period of activity dependant on the weather and the cycles of nature.

The Trail can be taken as a casual self-guided walk or with an Aboriginal female guide. Its purpose is to pass on traditional knowledge of native plants, animals and natural resources to all people. It is hoped the Trail will aid in the conservation and protection of this sacred women's site by creating increased cultural awareness of the area.

Along the Trail there are several resting places as well as storyboards depicting the Noongar six seasons. This Trail guide will point out significant trees, plants and animals from the Noongar culture, according to these seasons.

The Trail finishes in a gathering place where you are welcome to sit and reflect.

Please consider the heritage of this site and stay on the path.

History

Noongar History at Piney Lakes Reserve

Aboriginal women have cared for our country and their families on this continent for thousands of years. Their knowledge of plants, to be used for food and medicine, was shared with their children and sustained by strictly following the Noongar six seasons.

Following these seasonal changes enabled the conservation and protection of natural resources and ensured sustainability of the environment for future generations.

Piney Lakes Reserve is a significant site for the traditional custodians of the area, as it was a sacred place for Noongar women who performed ceremonies, discussed women's business and took young boys through their level one initiation here.

The Bidi Katitjiny Aboriginal Women's Trail reflects the special relationship Noongar people, especially women, still have with this land today and aims to promote their unique identity and history.

The Noongar Six Seasons

Bunuru (the fruiting)

February to March

Bunuru (boon-oo-roo) was characterised by hot, easterly conditions with afternoon sea breezes. Noongar people moved to coastal estuaries and reefs where fish and abalone constituted a portion of their seasonal diet. Large fish could also be speared from overhanging trees along river banks. At the end of this season, Noongar people would fire the land to help native plants revegetate, so the bush would be replenished when the rains arrived (just like re-stocking the shelves of a supermarket, the bush needs to replenish itself). The colours of this season are yellow, orange and red.



Flora

Boyur (*boy-yur*)

Common name: Woolly Bush

This plant has soft foliage and gets red tips on the ends of the fronds during flowering season. There is one located adjacent to the sign.

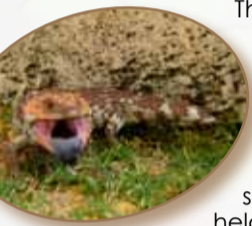
Noongar people used the soft foliage of the Boyur for such things as a base for bedding, water-proofing the tops of Mia Mia's (shelters) and also as a natural toilet paper (which European settlers would later copy).

Fauna

Yourn (*yorn*)

Common Name: Bobtail Lizard

The Yourn is a common shingleback lizard found within Piney Lakes Reserve. He can be seen during Bunuru, basking in the morning sun along the various tracks. They are a close relation to blue-tongued lizards. Yourn provided a great source of food for Noongars. He also held medicine for the Noongar people when they were sick.



Djeran (first dew)

April to May

Djeran (jeren) began when the weather became cooler, with winds from the south-west. Fishing continued, but the people would eventually begin to migrate back to the wetland areas, like Piney Lakes Reserve. Hunting increased as the emus were fat and Yargaan (turtles) became active. There was plenty of opportunity to gather as they walked, and the women would collect Bayou nuts from the Jeeriji (Zamia Palm), as well as bulbs and seeds from other plants. The colours of this season are red, brown and grey.



Flora

Balga

Common name: Grass Tree

This native plant is located to the right of the Djeran sign and will have finished flowering in this season.

The Balga takes over 100 years to mature as a plant, so Noongar people ensured they used every part of it if they had to kill it. There are over 30 known uses. The heart of the Balga is a food source and provided moisture (the centre is a coconut-like substance). The black stem has wood chips at its base in which Bardi grubs find shelter and the long protruding stems are a good structural support for Mia Mia's. Another important use is in the creation of "bush glue" in which the sap of the Balga, Yonga (kangaroo) faeces and charcoal are mixed together to make a strong, adhesive substance.



Fauna

Yargaan (*yar-gan*)

Common name: Long-Necked Turtle

A main source of nutrition during Djeran was wetland meats, such as Yargaan's which were a good source of protein for Noongar people. They were easy to hunt as they are slow moving, and often more easily found once the weather becomes cooler. You can see Yargaan's if you venture down to Piney Lakes wetland area.

Makuru (cold and wet)

June to July

During Makuru (muck-a-roo) Noongar people continued to migrate inland to the Darling Scarp to hunt and to shelter from the cold coastal winds. During this season, the Yonga Booka was turned inside out, with the fur for warmth against the skin, and the oiled side provided water-proof protection against the rains. The colours of this season are grey and black.



Flora

Condil

Common name: Tea Tree

A Condil is located adjacent and to the right of the Trail as you head towards the sign for Makuru.

Noongar people used the oils from the leaves in easing colds and other Makuru illnesses. They would burn the foliage and seat children near the fire so that they may breathe in the perfumes to clear their chests.

Fauna

Quenda

Common name: Southern Brown Bandicoot

The Yongas, Quendas and other marsupials (such as wallabies, woylies and possums) were ready to eat during Makuru. It was important that Noongar people ate a heavy meat diet during Makuru to keep up their energy and fat reserves for warmth. To spot evidence of a Quenda, the only native marsupial left at Piney Lakes Reserve, look around you at the sandy soil and you will see small, conical holes. These are the markings of a Quenda in search of grubs and fungus to eat.



Djilba (cold and rain easing)

August to September

When the weather began to get warmer in Djilba (jilba), Noongar groups moved to the drier Canning-Kelmscott areas. During this calmer weather, the bush began to rejuvenate and plants began to bloom. Common foods were those found along the rivers, including eggs from water fowl, emus, swans and ducks. This food was supplemented by berries, roots and some larger game. Colours of this season are black, blue and green.

Flora

Yonga Marra

Common Name: Kangaroo Paw

Look to the right of this sign and you will see many Yonga Marra.

Yonga Marra begins to flower during Djilba. They have large, red flowers (resembling a kangaroo paw) and have tuberous roots which contain high levels of starch.

This is why they were eaten as an important part of the Noongar diet. Yonga Marra also has some medicinal qualities.



Fauna

Kyooya (*coi-ya*)

Common name: Frog

Often during Djilba you would hear the calls of the Kyooya coming from the wetland. This was a good indication to Noongar people that they were nearing water. As you walk the Trail, you might hear two different species of Kyooya – the Clicking Froglet (pictured) or the Quacking Frog. Both species like to live in damp areas but do not require a constant water body.



Kambarang (the flowering)

October to November

The 'flowering' is the height of the wildflower season and an important time for Noongar women. Quandong Trees were ripening, ready for harvesting later in the season, as well as other small shrubs that produce berries. Families moved back towards the coast where frogs, turtles and freshwater crayfish (or gilgies) and blue marron were caught. Snakes and goannas were also a good source of food during this season. The colours of Kambarang are blue and green.



Flora

Quandong

Common name: Quandong Tree

Quandong trees ripen toward the end of Kambarang, and have a deep red, sweet fruit, with a very high level of Vitamin C. Noongar people would sometimes cook the berries and used to make a sweet jam as a condiment to traditional damper bread. Damper was made by grinding the seeds of a variety of plants to produce a flour, including those of the Marri (eucalypt) and Wuanga (wung-ga) Wattle Trees, both of which you can find in Piney Lakes Reserve.

Fauna

Djidi Djidi (*jidi- jidi*)

Common name: Willy Wagtail

This bird respects the land by dancing and singing and giving thanks for providing his food. You will see a lot of Djidi Djidi's around the Women's Trail in Kambarang, dancing and singing at ground level and in the foliage of the trees as they search for mates. If you sit quietly at the Karla (fire) resting place, you will hear the chattering sound that is their call.



Birak (hot and dry)

December to January

Birak was characterised by the onset of hot easterly winds. The signals of the season were the blossoming of Moodja (Christmas Trees) and Mudrooroo (Paperbark Trees). An abundance of food was found along the coastal lakes and river estuaries, such as mullet, bream, marron and crabs, which were fat and ready to harvest. The colours of this season are green, blue, yellow and orange.

Flora

Biara (*bee-ah-ra*)

Common Name: Firewood Banksia

This plant has large bright red flowers and located to the left of the Birak sign.

Biara has finished flowering by the end of Kambarang. The flowers produce a sweet, honey-like nectar, which was used to make a drink called Mungitch. This was done by soaking the flowers in water. Noongar people also used the dried pods of the Firewood Banksia (pictured) to transport fire during migration.



Fauna

Yonga

Common Name: Kangaroo

During Birak, Noongar people used kangaroo skin to make a protective coat called a Yonga Booka (Kangaroo coat).

The Booka was worn with the fur on the outside. Oils were rubbed into the underside of the skin which would mix with the sweat of the people, to aid in cooling them down as the breeze passed through. It also acted as a protective shield against the harsh wind and sun of Birak. Unfortunately, Yonga's are no longer found in Piney Lakes Reserve.

