



# Western Australia

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Swapping cleats for flippers to float through the **Little Salmon Bay snorkel trail** (p265)
- Wine crawling along **Caves Rd** (p270)
- Scaling the **Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree** (p274)
- Parking up inside the **Giant Tingle Tree** (p275)
- Discovering beach perfection at **Greens Pool** (p275)

## TERRAIN

Low, heavily forested hills through the southwest corner. Flat limestone and gentle dunes on Rottnest Island.

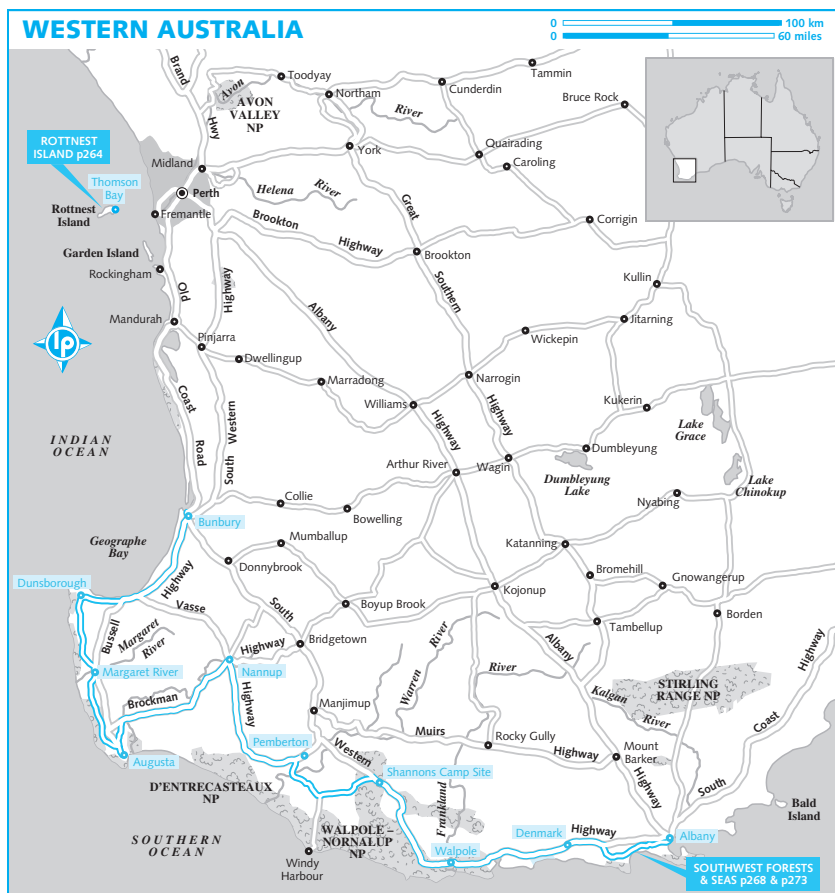
Telephone code – 08

[www.dpi.wa.gov.au/  
cycling/1515.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/cycling/1515.asp)

[www.westernaustralia.com](http://www.westernaustralia.com)

For cyclists, Western Australia (WA) can be unnervingly large. Covering one-third of Australia's land mass, the state is 10 times the size of the UK and almost as large as Argentina, with settlement pressed hard against the coast by the large deserts at its back. Riding here, however, doesn't need be all about big distances and complicated logistics. The southwest corner of the state is as enticing, and as manageable, as anything in the eastern states, and usually with a whole lot less traffic to worry about. Here, you can have green forests, white beaches and blue seas by day and reds and whites from the celebrated Margaret River wine region by night. Your rides will indeed be colourful, especially if you visit during spring, when the southwest turns on Australia's finest wildflower display.

This chapter includes descriptions of two rides, one long and one short. On Rottnest Island bicycles share the road only with the island bus service, and whether you use Rottnest as a warm-up to longer things or simply a day ride of its own merit, you'll appreciate all the things that have made it such a popular cycling destination, from the traffic-free roads to the endless succession of beaches. The Southwest Forests & Seas ride ranges through most of southern WA's major attractions, passing caves, beaches and vineyards and breezing beneath some of the world's tallest forests. You may not know about karri and tingle trees now, but you soon will.



## ENVIRONMENT

Western Australia's southern forests are of a type found nowhere else on earth, with the magnificent karri, jarrah and tingle trees endemic to this part of the state. Karri trees will be the most noticeable as you ride, their salmon-pink, ruler-straight trunks making them among the most beautiful eucalyptuses in the country, right up there with the snow and ghost gums. For more detailed information about karri and tingle trees, see p276.

Western Australia's most striking natural sight is its spring wildflowers, with the state having more than 12,000 recorded types of wildflower, including around 4000 in the southwest. A couple of good wildflower

websites, if you want to study up, are CALM's **FloraBase** (<http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au>) and the **Wildflower Society of Western Australia** (<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/manydays.htm>). The latter has special sections on the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge, Pemberton region and Albany region.

Cyclists following the ride descriptions in this chapter have a great chance to see one of WA's iconic mammals, the quokka (see boxed text p266) and an armada of whales. Humpback whales frequent the waters off the Leeuwin-Naturalise coast (near Margaret River) from around October to December, while southern right whales can be seen between June and September.