

TRIP REPORT



Written by Paul Hemmings

GUILDERTON TO SEABIRD AND MOORE RIVER RUN

Out and about 4x4 club Inc. - Sunday, 30 May 2021



PARTICIPANTS

Paul Hemmings (Trip Leader)
Kerry Gillies and Steve Dickens
Margot and David Mayes
Jo and Roger Graham
Steve King
Robyn and Chris Tucker
Frank Marzoli

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Guilderton

Guilderton is a small coastal town north of Perth, Western Australia at the mouth of the Moore River in the Shire of Gingin. It was originally known as Gabbadah, an Aboriginal term meaning "mouthful of water" until its gazetting as a town on 30th November 1951. The river mouth regularly opens and closes depending on the seasons, and alternates between a closed lagoon and a tidal estuary.



The area has been used as a camping and recreation spot since 1905 when the residents of nearby Gingin petitioned for a road to be constructed to the area. The area was declared as a recreation area in 1907.

In 1931, 40 silver guilder coins from the 17th century were found in the sandhills near the entrance to the Moore River – thus the name Guilderton. The coins were thought to be from the wreck of the Dutch ship, Vergulde Draeck (Gilt Dragon) that had foundered on a reef north of the river-mouth near Ledge Point in 1656.

In 1983, the Federal Department of Transport established a lighthouse at Wreck Point, Guilderton near the river mouth at a cost of \$240,000. This was the last brick tower style lighthouse built in Australia.

The town is a popular holiday destination for Perth residents, who commonly refer to it as Moore River. Population at last census was 172.

Seabird

Seabird was originally a "Fisherman's Village" where lobster fishing boats housed their crew. One of the first inhabitants was a Mr "Horrie" McCormick. The first name proposed for the town was "Chalon". The local community preferred the name Seabird which recalled a maritime accident in 1874 when the schooner *Seabird* had her side split open. The town was gazetted in 1968.

In recent times, significant damage has been caused to the fore dunes by encroaching seas as sea levels change. In 2015 local residents took their concerns to the State Government to see what could be done to reduce the damage done by winter storms.

Turner Street, that used to run along the foreshore, has now been completely swallowed by the ocean and beach-front houses are now under threat of suffering the same fate. As a short term solution, the State Government committed \$2,000,000 for the construction of a sea wall and restoration work has been undertaken.

Moore River

The area has been used by the Yued people for eons, and for general recreation since the earliest days of white settlement in the Gingin district. It was renamed River Moore in May 1836 by Corporal Patrick Heffron of the 63rd Regiment of Foot, after his expedition leader George Fletcher Moore, Advocate-General.

The Moore River has a catchment of over 12,000 square kms and its main source is Dalwallinu over 200km inland. The river flows westward through Moora and Mogumber descending the Dandaragan scarp near Regan's Ford, southwards to join Gingin Brook at Neergabby, becoming an estuary at Boobabbie Bridge (which is now inaccessible), and flowing to the ocean at Guilderton, when the sandbar is open. Ground springs also feed the river at several places along Gingin Brook and the estuary.



Members assembled at the Moore River Rest Area, filled in the trip registration form and spent a short time socialising before getting ready for the trip briefing and start. There was a short moment where it was thought a couple of visitors may be joining us so the convoy waited until the designated start time before venturing off on the day's outing. During this time we experienced a reasonable downpour of rain and because of the promising forecast, thought that this would likely be the last of the rain for the morning.



We drove over to Guilderton and made our way to the historic light house on Tank Road and proceeded to air down our tyres for our trip through the dunes. Many of our members put up their sand flags whilst I as the Trip Leader seemed to forget this obvious need and went off to take a bunch of photos. Shortly after the start of our trip I finally realised my mistake and we stopped on the track where I managed to put my flag on the front of my vehicle.



The scenery was absolutely stunning and we could see quite a way out to sea towards the West and South West. The weather seemed to be building on the horizon but none of that was an issue for us as we proceeded to drive through the dunes.

The start of our trip typified the way the whole trip from Guilderton to Seabird would be driven. There were concerns that one or more vehicles would be bogged in the sand and therefore we would be spending a reasonable amount of our time conducting vehicle recoveries. As it turned out, we quickly realised that the sand was quite firm due to all the recent rain and it became clear that it would take something unusual for any of us to become stuck.



This track is often used by people living in these towns to travel back and forth. In addition, the track is a well known 4WD track and is used by many different Clubs. Fortunately for us on this day, there was absolutely no one else on the track for the whole length and we had it all to ourselves for this outing.



The track consists of many different types of driving conditions including steep uphill grades and equally steep downhill descents. We drove through winding sections that at times closed in around the vehicles producing for some a couple of minor scratches. We also drove over cap rocks, tree roots and long stretches of compacted sand. The trip was around 10 Klms and came out on the South side of the Seabird town.



We drove the short distance to the foreshore park on Edwards Street to air up and have some lunch. By this time the weather was changing for the worse and a strong gale force wind began blowing

across the area followed by heavy squally rains. This lasted throughout the air up process before some bright club member realised that we were parked across from the Seabird Tavern. So one by one we drifted across the road and found ourselves all sitting around a table whilst various goodies were brought out for individual members to eat.



Once the rain had died down we drove out of the town and across Indian Ocean Drive into the entry point for the Moore River bush area, where some of us aired down our tyres (others decided they did not need to). One of our members left the convoy around this time and the rest of us drove down the track to the river. The track here is known to be really soft in places and also deep because of all the traffic that comes into this area. However, as we found on the Guilderton to Seabird track, the Moore River track was also quite solid and therefore could be driven without worrying about becoming stuck.

When we arrived at the river we parked up at the river crossing area and discussed the possibility of driving across to the otherside and back. As it turned out only two of our members wanted to do this and it was left for the two Nissan Patrol drivers to show us all how to do the crossing.

We drove back to the air up point where the day concluded around 3.30pm. Members then made their way back home, with each of us once again taking a great collection of memories, photos and good times.

See you all on the next trip.

