



Dirk Hartog Island/ Denham Trip

14 May – 28 May 2022

Report by Karen Collins & pictures by Jo Wilson with additional short reports from Bob & Frank

In Attendance

Jo & Roger

Mike & Claire

Frank Marizio

Chris Redgrove

John Stacy

Bob Dorizzi

Damian & Karen

Greg & Pauline

Day 1 Overlander Roadhouse

On the First day, we all drove up to the Overlander Road House. By late afternoon we had all settled in excited about our adventure ahead. Half the gang headed to the tuck-shop for a cooked meal, with all taking in an early night.



Day 2 Overlander to Steep Point

By 9am we left the Overlander for the long-awaited trip out to Steep Point. With all the rough track stories on Facebook, we prepared for the worst. Happily, very pleasantly surprised. The couple of challenging hills were in very good conditions. Jo and Roger, the first to climb the 1.8km mentioned

by a lot of people in the past as soft and boggy. Corrugations were tough in places also. We arrived at Steep Point late afternoon safe and sound checking in with the Ranger.



Camp was quickly set up on the beach. While Jo went fishing, we all watched the amazing sunset over the bay, anticipating our Barge Crossing the following morning.



Day 3 Steep Point to DHI

It was a very early rise for all. We packed up in the dark while keeping an eye on the beautiful sunrise. At 7am the barge fast approaching across the calm waters. Chris was chosen to be our “Test Dummy” and was the first to drive off the beach onto the barge to show us all how its done. After a 15min crossing. Each vehicle, one by one, got on and off the barge with no difficulties. There was only some soft sand on the beach when disembarking. Most of us were excited, anxious and very relieved to make it across safely onto firm ground off the beach.



20km drive up the windy track, with plenty of corrugation, we found “The Lodge” and our campgrounds nearby. Camp was set up by lunchtime with us looking out over the beautiful bay, with blue waters and sky. The afternoon was spent just relaxing around camp after a couple of days doing long driving day. Happy hour bought another beautiful warm evening and sunset, with most of us heading to the Bar/Café on the beach only meters from the water’s edge. On return to camp, we found plenty of mice making themselves at home at our campsite.





Day 4 DHI Drive Day to the top point.

With perfect weather of blue skies and a light breeze the convoy headed out for a day's drive. The corrugation was even worse today than it was yesterday. Our first stop was Notch Point 45mins from camp. The Bay was mirror flat; the perfect weather made it just too good to leave. But we had a long way to go, it was time to get going.

Unknow to us, the tide was coming in, very fast. In the short time we spent at The Bay (15 mins) water was covering the track Infront of us. Oops, no one thought to check when high tide was.

With a few salt water crossings, the drive through the Sand dunes, we were back to very corrugated and slow drive to Louisa Day. As it was 1pm, it was decided to take a lunch break. Damian spent the time bolting his exhaust pipe back up, after finding it hanging with bolts missing.

At this point, the weather was changing. Clouds and the wind were rolling in. It was time to pick up the pace and push on to Cape Inscription to see the Light House at the most northern point of the island. It was great spending time to explore the lookout, cliff faces, lighthouse and homestead. It would have been a very isolated place to live. It was a perfect time to put the drones up to get some great footage.





When it was time to leave, poor Greg had a problem with his car not starting, It Wasn't too long before the guys got it going. We were on our way once again.



With the sun quickly starting to drop, and sunset at 5.30, expecting a long drive back in the dark. We all got moving as fast as we could over the terrible corrugations. We were all very fortunate to reach the "Sand Dunes" and Salt water low areas just as the last glimpses of light in the early night skies.

It was soon Dark, with our night lights on, Roger's gps navigation decided there was a short cut back to camp and would save us sometime. Unfortunately, we found it just got narrower and started pinstripping the vehicles. With a very difficult turn around on a narrow track we all made it back to camp in one piece. With a couple of drinks and quick dinner we were all ready for bed with our fury friends watching. It was a great day of diverse driving, covering sand dunes, tied coming in on us, corrugations, and night driving.

Day 5 Blowholes & Surf Point

We woke in the morning a little concerned about the weather. There had been quite a bit of rain overnight. But we had no sooner left camp to find the clouds clearing and the sunshine peeping out, turned out to be a very nice day. After a short 30min drive to "The Blowholes" Chris put his drone up for cliff shots. We enjoyed some magnificent cliff views. It was Jo's turn to play with her drone taking video of Bob and Roger playing on the hills behind the blowholes with there vehicles.



We then headed off to “Surf Point” and drove the best road on DHI. No Corrugations! It was a nice little point to stop and take a little time to enjoy the sites. On the way back to camp, we stopped off at “Anthony’s Gym”. It was outdoor, weights on a hill top over looking the Bay. Anthony has a cool place to hangout for a workout. The View was just amazing. With happy hour fast approaching it was time to head back to camp, we all headed down the beach to the bar for some sunset drinks on the beach. It was a very enjoyable day. Once again, our little friends came into camp to join us for dinner and spent most of the night scratching, trying to enter my tent.



Day 6 – Quoin Head & Camp Day.

By morning, a few of our campers found they had some furry hitchhikers decided to hide in their vehicles. This was certainly a problem trying to get them out. Mice are so sneaky. Half the vehicles headed out for a day's drive up to Quoin Head, while the other half remained in camp. Pauline organized a morning tea, with a table cloth and carrot cake. It was a five-star camp morning tea enjoyed by all those who stayed in camp. Delicious! We spent the afternoon relaxing and getting our vehicles ready for tomorrow's Badge Crossing.



Day 7 – Badge Crossing to Steep Point.

With a 5am wake up call, it was all hands on in the dark to pack up camp ready to head to the Badge at 7.15. We were very happy to leave behind our little furry friends. But there was talk about hitchhikers trying to escape the island. We were lucky to find perfect conditions at the Badge Departure Point. Greg had problems starting his car again on the beach, so we sent on the badge early. But when Greg got to the other side and disembarked, he managed to get bogged. Much to Pauline's relief several young men came to the rescue, and made a quick recovery in the soft sand. One by one we all made it back to the main land.

Once again, we had an amazing campsite right on the beach. Mike and Clair left the convoy and returned to Hamlin Bay and their comfy caravan. The rest of the day was spent setting up camp, relaxing, enjoying the moment of the beautiful bay and sunset.



Day 8 – Steep Point Circuit

We woke to a perfect morning of blue skies. Greg & Pauline decided to return to Denham due to ongoing car issues. Now with only 6 vehicles left we headed to Starfish Beach, for a quick stop to check out the Beach. A short drive later we arrived at the all-important Steep Point, it was an opportunity to take a Club Photo of the gang.



With a slow but interesting drive over the rock cape and bumpy tracks, we continued around the point to the west side, taking in the magnificent, rugged cliffs. We stopped at the ship wreck site, Blowholes, and drove around the cliff top for a late lunch overlooking Thunder Bay. A short trip back to camp for a rest, then happy hour and another fantastic sunset to finish the day.



Day 9 – Steep Point to Hamelin Bay.

With the weather changing and the waters becoming very choppy, we broke camp and made a quick stop at the South/West end of the National Park. By the time we had arrived, the ocean was extremely rough and windy. A storm was approaching. We only just got back to our vehicles when the rain started. It was now a quick dash across the corrugated road on hearing they were closing the road in 30 mins. We were lucky and made it across the causeway with no problems.

Hamelin Station Stay was a great setup and facilities for our group. By dinnertime the rain had once again found us. But we were able to commune in the shearers shed until the rain eased.



Day 10 - Hamelin Station – Denham – Hamelin Station

Plan for the day changed as we were in for a day of wet weather and stormy weather out at the Nation Park. It was decided to stay another night at Hamelin Station. With Gloomy dark skies we headed off to Eagle Bluff Lookout cliff tops and boardwalk. We stopped at Ocean Park Aquarium for a cozy morning tea indoors. Then into Denham, France Perron NP to check out the camping location at Big Lagoon. We then took a 12km sandy track, enjoyable 4WD trip out to Cape Peron to admire the views of the bay. It gave us all enough time to return to Denham to restock our supplies and head off the Pub for a counter Meal. We all had a lot of laughs with Damian playing Fine Masters Court. Handing out club fines playing Judge and Chris and Bob as Jurors. It was a long drive back to camp in the rain and dark. Thank goodness for the spotlights.



Day 11 – Hamelin to Big Lagoon

We woke to a beautiful morning after the previous nights stormy weather passing though. The main group moved camp out to Big Lagoon with some members choosing to stay in their caravans at Denham C/P. After lunch with Big Lagoon Camp set up, we took a 14km drive out to “Krashkoe’s Tank”. This was tough country for tough men before our comfy 4WDs. With corrugations and sandy tracks, we head a further 20km to “Cattle Well” on the beach. Chris took the opportunity to get some drone shots in. It was an enjoyable drive for the afternoon. We returned to camp for Happy Hour and another amazing sunset.



Day 12 – Francois Peron N/P Day Trip.

With perfect weather and blue skies, the day was spent driving to the tip of the National Park.

With a variety of corrugations, sandy tracks, we stopped at 3 beaches along the way. South Gregory, Gregories, and Bottle Bay. Cape Peron, we stopped for lunch and a walk along the hill top or walking along the beach. Frank took the opportunity to have a fish with no luck. Chris flew his drone getting some wonderful shots of the group and coast. After an enjoyable break, beautiful scenery it was off to Skipjack Point. This is the tip of the Nation Park with the light house. After a 200m boardwalk along the cliffs, with marvelous ocean views, we sighted Stingrays and sharks in the waters below.

This was truly worth all the corrugation to get here.



Back at camp we held our Fine Masters Court with our Judge (Damo) and Jury (Chris & Bob) once again giving us a bunch of laughs as Mike & Clair joined the festivities defended their Stuart Little kidnapping charges. An amazing days driving, scenery and laughter. Thanks Damo, Chris & Bob for the entertainment.

Day 13 – Denham to East Golf Beach Day Trip.

With an early start into Denham for essential supplies of coffee and tucker, we headed out to find the track to the beach. In anticipation of clay pans, water and the unknow, we aired down. What a completely different drive compared to the last 2 days at Francoin Peron N/P. An enjoyable drive along station tracks out to the coast at East Golf Bay. The track then changed to a variety of beach driving to Rocky cape stone, to soft sand tracks. On the return we encounter Clay Pans which roger guided us thru. Bob managed to find an easy chicken track around the mud hole. We stopped at Little Lagoon for lunch under the gazebo, overlooking the lagoon. It was a great day out of enjoyable driving.



Day 14 Leaving Big Lagoon.

Today was pack up day from Big Lagoon, heading into Denham for Coffee and supplies.

The group once again split, the majority heading towards the Geraldton region.

Thank Jo and Roger for a very well-planned trip.

Jo finalizing this part of the trip with a picture of our final destination at Linga Longa Farm Stay at Lynton Station - Northampton.



Chris's recollection of events 😊

DHI, Steep Point FPNP trip notes (more of a brief summary really)

What happens when ten raucous 4WD and camping enthusiasts, ravenous for adventure, want to escape the Perth winter drudgery? They head north to the warmer climes of Steep Point, Dirk Hartog Island and Francois Peron NP where the wildlife is rabid, the midgies are rancid and general behavior is often rambunctious. Welcome to another Out and About 4WD club trip.

(I did consider stopping here and just leaving it at that as it's the best part but unfortunately there's more)

Northampton, Overlander Roadhouse, and Hamelin Station were reasonably nice stopovers on the way to the real deal, firstly Steep Point. To get there, we experienced corrugation overload but eventually got to the barge point, a very nice camp spot on the beach. Early next morning the barge took the group one by one, across to our destination for the next four nights, Dirk Hartog Island. The barge trip was short, just 15 minutes one way, but a very pleasant as the water was exceptionally clear and no sign of rain.

Camped by the picturesque bay, days were spent 4WD sight-seeing and exploring, relaxing, and enjoying refreshments at the island lodge. Tap beer was a very pleasant surprise and very welcome after a day out driving. Points of interest such as Cape Inscription, Blowholes, Dampier's Landing, Quoin Bluff South, and Louisa Bay we felt it was definitely worth the drive to get to and provided a great focus for the group to get out and see the island.

A large king brown snake put the fear of God into anyone it came across and strangely left most of the men in the group paralyzed with fear. It didn't really care about us, it was too busy feasting on the mice plague that seemed to prevail on the island.

Once back on the mainland we camped at Shelter Bay, spending two nights exploring the surrounds including Steep Point.



Steep Point (I think)

It was noticed by the more observant of the group that the coastline continued all the way around and seemed to be wherever the ocean was. And we all went “ahh yes, we hadn’t noticed that before” and quietly walked off without another word.



Cliffs and coastline near Steep Point

We eventually made our way around to Denham and Francois Peron National Park. We spent three great days exploring the area and noteworthy points of interest included Cattle Well, Gregories, Bottle Bay, Cape Peron and in particular Skipjack Point where we were mesmerized by the array marine life on display. Many of the beachside camp spots throughout the National Park were in very

picturesque locations and very much worth a visit on another day, another trip. Overall, Francois Peron National Park was an extremely pleasant surprise as a location I will definitely return to.

Special mention must go to the very innovative fines master Damo who introduced an exciting new aspect where the fine offender can plead their case to a jury consisting of two very moral, fair minded and esteemed individuals (Chris and Bob) who then evaluate the defense. If the defense is considered fair and with merit, the fine is cancelled, however if it is not a valid defense the fine is doubled and in some cases, it was suggested the fine even be tripled due to the offender wasting the valuable time of the jury members. Great idea Damo and excellent entertainment.

(Just to note here, my services as a juror are for hire, just call the number on the screen, and remember my motto is *"Every man has his price"*)

A great trip to a fantastic part of the world.

Bob's close encounter after Clair's discovery

"Hey Bob, I think I just saw a snake" came Claire's voice out of the dark as I was deciding on what I would have for tea that night. I was just going to the showers and there it was lying across the middle of the track, she continued. I better have a look says I, full of male scepticism.



I grabbed my torch and followed Claire around to the pathway to check out this "snake". No sign of any snake on the pathway. Could have been a bit of wood, I suggest. Maybe, says an unconvinced Claire, could have been but it sure looked like a snake. Better have a look around, says I. So we poked around in the undergrowth with me in the safety of my sandals and shining my torch on wooden sticks everywhere..... Whoa! Suddenly there it was! All 5 metres of it coiled up, arching its back and glaring at me with its beady little eyes ready to sink those gigantic fangs dripping with venom into me!



Claire and I made an orderly but hasty retreat to a safer position but not before I had stared down the snake and forced it to retreat. Claire was happy that she wasn't just imagining things (and had a witness to prove it) and me thankful that I had brought a sufficient supply of clean undies with me.

(FACT CHECK: it was about 2 metres long; was coiled up and lazily moved its head when spotlighted by the torch. In its own time, it slowly slithered off in the undergrowth to get away from us once it had mustered the energy to do so.)

Along with Greg and Pauline I decided to remain at camp the following day and not head out on the day trip with the others. I had some sorting to do and also wanted to make sure that there wasn't a strange, elongated lump under my tent floor. Mid - afternoon another camper and his young family came to warn us about a snake they had been tracking. It had worked its way through the other campsites and was heading in our direction! It was now in the undergrowth on the edge of our camp. We surrounded the bushes in question and waited.

About 15 minutes later it appeared and made its way down to the next clump of bushes. It slithered across open ground and through another couple of bushes; each time pausing for around 15 minutes. It continued on its way towards where we encountered the snake (maybe this one) the night before. The snake worked its way through Frank's camp, under the shower/toilet block and into the same undergrowth as last night again pausing at each spot for about 15 minutes. In due course it was sighted again but this time disappearing down a hole in the ground at virtually the same spot we had sighted it last night. A moment or two later 2 mice came scurrying out of the hole obviously in a hurry to be somewhere else. Anywhere else but here! After about 30 minutes a tiny head (about the size of a man's thumb) appeared at the mouth of the hole. It cautiously appeared and disappeared a few times until it decided it was safe to come out. The snake then slowly slithered out of the hole and into the undergrowth heading back in the direction it had come from.

A check of my "Australia's Most Dangerous" snake book back home makes me think our visitor could have been a **Western Brown Snake**. Although they are venomous, they produce only small amounts of venom and sometimes don't even inject it when they bite because they have such small fangs. If you get bitten you can still be in trouble big time though.

In an interesting chat with the Barge Captain on the return crossing to the mainland he highlighted that the Parks and Wildlife people had "heaps" of traps throughout the National Park area of the island which were regularly catching up to 500 (yes; he said 500) mice a night. Instead of despatching them, they marked their bellies and set them free! Apparently to track their movements in the wild. To help control their numbers though, they introduced 6 snakes known to feed on mice to the island (I'm guessing here that they have a plan B for the future when/if those snake numbers become excessivesounds a bit like the Queensland cane toad fiasco to me and we all know how well that went!). Also, apart from the introduced snakes there has always been and still are Dugites on the island.