Warren Bonython Loop Walk via Mount Hiltaba

All walkers must register before departing at Hiltaba Homestead

One way 10 km loop walk, allow 5 hours

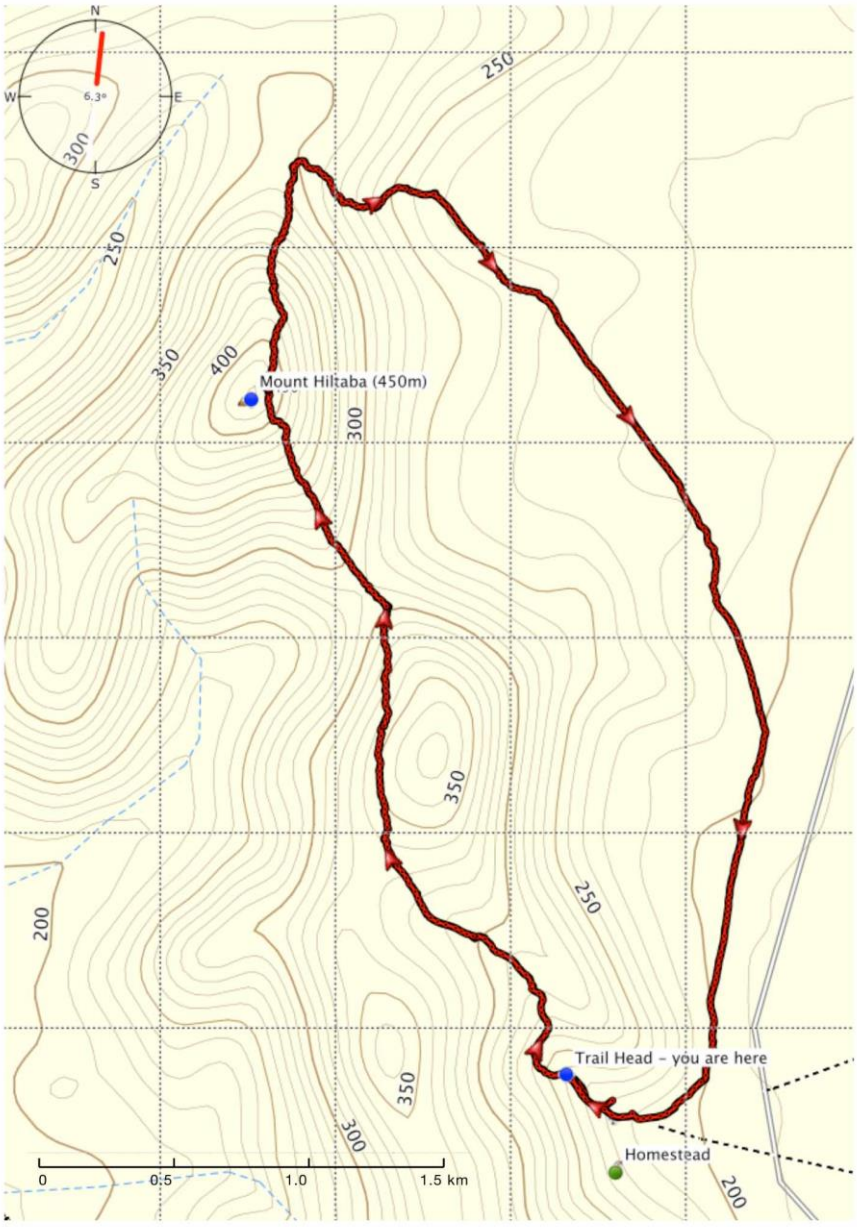
Some steep sections

Rough track with many obstacles

Track signs approximately every 200 to 500 metres

Suitable for experienced walkers

High points may have Telstra mobile phone coverage



Warren Bonython Loop via Mount Hiltaba – Trail Notes
April 10 2015

- **Nature Foundation SA strongly recommends a buddy system** – this trail should not be walked alone.
- **Register your trip** – please register your trip at the Hiltaba Homestead. If the Hiltaba Managers are not available it is mandatory that all walkers log their details (including people walking, vehicle registration and start time) in the Registration Book located on the side of the garage at the Hiltaba Homestead.
- **Plan your trip** – walkers must take personal responsibility for their own safety with suitable footwear, clothing, have navigation device/s (compass/GPS), adequate water, food, medical and first aid supplies. A suggested allowance for water in an arid area is 4 litres per person per day. Allow sufficient time to complete the walk before sunset (this is a day walk only).
- **Competency/Fitness Level** - this trail is challenging and is for more experienced walkers with a reasonable fitness level. There is no clear pathway and self-navigation may be required. Don't forget to stop and enjoy the spectacular views.
- **Caution:** Some steep sections, irregular surface with loose ground, Spinifex (*Triodia* species) (recommended use of hiking gaiters).
- **Trail markers** are up to 700 metres apart. Some sections are supplemented by pink ribbon between markers. Where distance is noted on trail markers, it refers to the distance back to the Hiltaba Homestead.
- **Mobile phone coverage** - Telstra mobile phone coverage *may* be available from high points. UHF channel 11 is the Hiltaba Homestead channel.
- **All vehicles are to be parked at Hiltaba Homestead**.

Distances referenced are distances from Hiltaba Homestead (starting point).

1. From Hiltaba Homestead to the start of the walk is 430 metres. Walk west past the generator shed and workshop to the base of the waterfall (after rain the normally dry gorge has a spectacular waterfall).
2. The loop walk is approximately 10 kilometres long and traverses some steep sections of hillside behind the old Hiltaba Homestead dam located at the base of an impressive waterfall (after rain).
3. The walk progresses to the south side of the waterfall and then follows up a picturesque creek line. After rain the many waterholes are soon filled with tadpoles and frogs (Desert Burrowing Frog – *Neobatrachus pictus*).
4. The trail now leaves the creek in a northerly direction along the north western side of the ridge past a large Black Oak (*Casuarina pauper*) growing out of the surrounding limestone (approximately 1300 metres along the walk).
5. Grasswrens (*Amytornis textilis myall* - Western Grasswren (Gawler Ranges) may be heard moving about between the Spinifex (*Triodia* species) in this area.

6. Looking to the north-west, the cairn (marker) on the top of Mt Hiltaba can be seen.
7. Still heading in a northerly direction (approximately 1800 metres), cross a creekline near a waterfall. Look out for Tea Tree (*Melaleuca glomerata*) and Red Mallee (*Eucalyptus gracilis* or *Eucalyptus socialis*) which grow along the creekline.
8. At approximately 2580 metres, the ascent to the top of Mt Hiltaba starts from the saddle.
9. At Mt Hiltaba summit (elevation 450 metres) at approximately 3500 metres into the walk there is a panoramic view of the surrounding environs. There is a visitors' book and map of the surrounding features on the eastern side of the historical cairn.
10. The trail now heads in a northerly direction down the ridge. Note the upright boulders on the side of the next range to the west. These are called 'Tors' or Tor singular. Known as Gawler Ranges Volcanics, this is one of the oldest volcanic landscapes in the world, around 1500 million years ago. An ancient lava field, it also contains the Hiltaba Suite granite which is a younger granite intrusion.
11. At the creekline, the trail now heads south-east towards the plain (approximately 4690 metres).
12. Continue south now towards a rocky outcrop (approximately 5200 metres). Trail goes through a lightly wooded area before heading past a large Black Oak (*Casuarina pauper*) (approximately 5700 metres).
13. Go past two more stands of Black Oak (*Casuarina pauper*) (approximately 6800 metres).
14. Go past a section of thick Bluebush (approximately 7700 metres).
15. Proceed past a stand of Black Oaks (*Casuarina pauper*) and through an area of many old discarded items that provide an insight into station life including cast iron beds and old car parts.
16. Cross the creek and you will see Mt Hiltaba Homestead.

Congratulations - you've completed the walk and experienced some spectacular views of Hiltaba Nature Reserve. If you have feedback on this walk please log when you sign-out, alternately email admin@nfsa.org.au – tell us what worked well and what we can do better.

If you'd like to share your photos of the walk with Nature Foundation SA then please email them to admin@nfsa.org.au – If used NFSA will credit the photographer and will not supply images to any third party.

Hiltaba Nature Reserve – Flora/Fauna/Geology

The Nature Foundation SA overarching management goal is to oversee the restoration of ecosystem health to Hiltaba. Hiltaba has very high biodiversity value and the creation of the Hiltaba Nature Reserve is providing protection for 9 species of national conservation significance and 40 species of state conservation significance in addition to 7 species that only occur in the Gawler Ranges:

- *Pterostylis ovata* - Gawler Ranges Greenhood
- *Grevillea parrallelinervis* - Gawler Ranges Grevillea
- *Dodonea intricata* - Gawler Ranges Hopbush
- *Acacia toondulya*- Toondulya Wattle
- *Protanthera florifera* – Gawler Ranges Mint Bush
- *Eucalyptus lansdowneana* - Crimson Mallee
- *Amytornis merrotsyi* ssp*. pedleri* - Short-tailed Grass-wren

Gawler Ranges Grevillea

The **Western Short-tailed Grasswren** (Gawler Ranges) inhabits rocky (granitic) hillsides, ridges and hilltops and may be found on the rocky rounded hilltops typical of Hiltaba. The vegetation is usually dominated by Spinifex (*Triodia species*) tussock grassland, usually with scattered spiny shrubs, particularly *Acacia species* and *Grevillea species*. Excessive frequencies of fires, both natural and human mediated, along with grazing, are the most immediate threats to the sub-species.

The total number of mature birds in the region is low and was estimated to be about 900 in 2010, based on estimates of a few hundred birds each at Paney Station and Mt Ive, and significantly fewer birds at each of four smaller sub-populations, including that on Hiltaba.

Grasswrens have been recorded on four hills on Hiltaba. One population occurs along the trail, about 1.5 km from the trail head.

Grasswrens are extremely shy and elusive and difficult to see, hiding under shrubs and darting across open ground. The call is a high, soft, squeaky and brief trill. You are more likely to hear these elusive birds than see them.

Geology - Gawler Craton in summary

Hiltaba Nature Reserve is located in the Gawler Craton which covers approximately 440,00 sq km of central South Australia.

The Gawler Range Volcanics (1590 Ma) form a huge felsic volcanic province, in the central Gawler Craton, with over 25 000 km^2 of preserved outcrop. They are divided into two broad groups, an upper and lower unit. The lower unit is more varied, gently to steeply tilted and contains dacite-rhyodacite-rhyolite, ignimbrites and flows with thick, interlayered sequences of basaltic lavas whereas the upper unit contains thick, subhorizontal, porphyritic dacite sheets predominantly ignimbritic in origin.

The extensive Hiltaba Suite (1600–1585 Ma) is comagmatic with the Gawler Range Volcanics and is dominated by felsic granite plutons. Outcrop is most abundant in the central Gawler Craton particularly on the western and south-western margins of the Gawler Range Volcanics.

This unit is characteristically pink due to hematite dusting of the feldspar crystals. The Hiltaba Suite and Gawler Range Volcanics were derived from partial digestion of the crust by mantle plumes and are the source for widespread Au-Cu-U mineralisation within the Gawler Craton.

Ref:
http://www.geothermal.dmitre.sa.gov.au/prospectivity/geothermal_provinces/gawler_craton?SQ_DESIGN_NAME=printer_friendly

Warren Bonython Walking Trail loop via Mt Hiltaba - Trail Coordinates

	Map Coordinates	UTM UPS	Progressive distance in metres
Hiltaba Homestead	53H	0506672 6441937	0
Top of Waterfall	53H	0506281 6442378	600
Exit Creek here, walk North West	53H	0505855 6442824	1300
View to Cairn on top of Mt Hiltaba	53H	0505713 6443217	2150
North Side of Waterfall	53H	0505711 6443710	2260
Saddle before ascent to Mount Hiltaba	53H	0505660 6444057	2600
Mt Hiltaba Summit	53H	0505297 6444828	3500
Creek Junction, walk East down the creek	53H	0505424 6445662	4690
Leave Creek, Walk South	53H	0505887 6445551	5200