

Visit Hiltaba Nature Reserve Frequently Asked Questions

February 2024

Thank you for visiting Hiltaba Nature Reserve, we hope you enjoy your stay. Here is some information to help you prepare for your visit.

Should you have any further questions, please speak with the Reserve Host during your stay, or email info@naturefoundation.org.au or call (08) 8340 2880 during business hours.

Further information can also be found on our website: www.naturefoundation.org.au

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Bookings, Payments, and your visit

Do I have to pay an entry fee to visit the Reserve?

There is no entry fee for the Reserve. However, fees are payable if you want to stay on the Reserve and/or enjoy our Nature Drives.

You can book your visit here: www.visit.naturefoundation.org.au

Hiltaba Nature Reserve is open between 1 April and 31 October to day visitors, campers and visitors staying in our accommodation. The reserve is closed to visitors during the summer months.

Accommodation and tours are subject to operational requirements (staff, contractors, researchers on site are given accommodation priority).

Hiltaba has two bush campsites. All sites are unpowered and unallocated. Hiltaba provides accommodation options with our Shearers Quarters and the Governess Cottage.

More detail on accommodation options is on our booking site: www.visit.naturefoundation.org.au

The fees you pay for Accommodation and Nature Drives help fund the ongoing management and conservation of our Nature Reserves. There are no fees for Nature Walks.

Are there showers available at Hiltaba?

In the Hiltaba Homestead Precinct, shared showers are available to those who have booked accommodation and are a short walk and adjacent to the Shearers Quarters. For campers, you can also book showers for a small fee. Please note these showers are approximately 7km from Pretty Point Campground.

Can we camp anywhere on the Nature Reserve?

- No, only in the designated campgrounds.

Can you accommodate RVs?

- No.

Do you have an RV dump?

- No.

What should I bring?

- All your food, personal, medical and care needs, and water for the visit.
- All your bedding for booked accommodation, a towel and all your camping or caravanning needs for our unpowered and unallocated campsites.
- Sturdy, covered shoes are recommended for walking in the nature reserves and around the Hiltaba Homestead Precinct.
- Layered clothing is recommended as the temperatures can be warm during the day and cold at night.
- Waterproof clothing is useful if rain is forecast.
- Insects (flies and/or mosquitos) may be present so flynets, long sleeves and trouser legs may be useful.
- As no external lights are present, a torch can be helpful when moving around at night time.
- Firewood and kindling if wanting a campfire.
- Plan well for your trip to minimise rubbish and ensure you take it with you to dispose responsibly.
- Camera to take photos and share your trip highlights with friends.

Can we top up our water tanks when we leave?

- Drinking water may be available, subject to availability but no non-potable water is available.

Is there mobile phone coverage on the reserve?

- Patchy Telstra coverage may exist, but it is not widespread or reliable.

Is there internet access on the Nature Reserve?

- Yes. There is limited internet access available for visitors. Ask our Reserve Hosts about this at the Visitor Reception area adjacent the Old Shearing Shed (see precinct map).

Are fridges and freezers available in the kitchens?

- Yes. The Shearers Quarters shared dining facility and Governess Cottage also has a kitchen/eating area with fridges and freezers.

Does the Governess Cottage have its own Bathroom facilities?

- Not yet — but building works are planned for 2024 to provide its own facilities. The Governess Cottage may not be available during this time, and existing bookings will be moved once building dates are finalised, to another accommodation option during the build. Currently bathroom facilities are located at the ATCO kitchen and bathroom facilities (located at Shearers Quarters) approximately 75 metres away.

Do the kitchens have cutlery, crockery, and basic appliances?

- Yes, all the kitchens on the Nature Reserves have crockery, cutlery, and basic appliances for guest use. In consideration of all our visitors, these facilities should be kept tidy and clean by all users.

Can I have a campfire on a reserve?

- Yes. You can use the fire rings at our camping and accommodation sites for campfires. Please ensure that you fully extinguish your campfire whenever you are not attending to it.
- Observe fire restrictions (no wood and solid fuel fires usually 1 November to 15 April and check the Visitor Information Board for any changes to Fire Season.
- No fires are permitted outside the fire rings on our Nature Reserves.

Is firewood available on the reserve?

- No. If you want to have a campfire in one of our fire rings **you must bring your own** kindling and firewood.
- Do not forage for, or cut down, wood on the reserves or outside our reserves. Dead and fallen timber is important habitat for birds, animals, and insects.

Can we use fire pigs/webbers/gas stoves?

- Yes.

Can I dispose of rubbish on the reserves?

- No — plan your trip well to minimise your rubbish.
- Bring garbage bags and take your rubbish with you when you leave to dispose of properly.
- We do collect 10 cent deposit containers and there are compost bins provided for food scraps to help minimise your waste management.

Is fuel available on the reserves?

- No. The closest fuel available at Hiltaba is at Mt Ive or at Wirrulla.

Can I charge my electric vehicle on the reserves?

- No. The reserves generally do not have facilities to charge electric vehicles from our solar powered systems.

Is food available on the reserves?

- No. Plan and bring all your food and water requirements for your visit.
- There is a general store at Wirrulla 70 km from Hiltaba. Mt Ive Station has limited supplies.

Is power available in the accommodation?

Yes — please see our booking system for relevant information about our accommodation.

Can I bring my pet to the Nature Reserve?

- No. Pets are NOT ALLOWED on the Nature Reserve. This is for the protection of native wildlife and your pet. Baiting programs are also undertaken on the Nature Reserves to manage invasive species.

Getting there

What are the roads like for AWD, 4WD, towed campervans, trailers and caravans?

The roads into the Nature Reserves are AWD and 4WD accessible (subject to weather conditions). Some of the Nature Drives are not accessible to AWDs.

Depending on your off-road experience with towed campervans and trailers, they may be able to be towed into the Nature Reserves. Please check road conditions for caravans. The roads to the Nature Reserves may be closed due to recent rain and at these times there are additional restrictions on vehicles and/or towing.

For information on road closures phone Transport SA on 1300 361 033 or visit their website <http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads>.

What's the best way to get to the Nature Reserves from Adelaide by road?

- 4WDs are recommended for travelling to Hiltaba. Some of the Nature Drives require high clearance 4WDs. Recent or impending rain will significantly impact access to and from Witchelina, and your safety while there.
- Weather conditions can be checked at <http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/forecasts/map.shtml> for weather in the Northwest Pastoral District.
- Check road conditions before travelling and be aware that significant penalties apply for travelling on a closed road.
- To check whether the roads are open phone Transport SA on 1300 361 033 or visit their website <http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads>

How do I get to Hiltaba?

- Via Mt Ive: From Adelaide the total distance is approx. 650km (310km sealed road to Port Augusta, 69km to Iron Knob and approx. 250km of well-maintained UNSEALED ROAD from Iron Knob to Hiltaba).
- The last fuel stop is Mt Ive which has unleaded and diesel fuel, open 7 days. Phone (08) 8648 1817.
- Via Wirrulla: From Adelaide the total distance is approx. 750km (680km sealed road to Wirrulla and 70km good UNSEALED ROAD from Wirrulla to Hiltaba). Wirrulla general store has unleaded and diesel fuel, open 7 days. Phone (08) 8626 8038.
- There is no fuel available at Hiltaba, so we recommend that you fill up at Mt Ive or at Wirrulla.
- For information about approaching Hiltaba in from other directions, please call the Adelaide office on (08) 8340 2880 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Emergency contact information — Hiltaba

- Hiltaba Homestead — Conservation Land Manager
- Telephone: (08) 8648 1885 UHF 06 duplex or UHF 11 simplex

Hiltaba medical advice

- Streaky Bay Hospital Phone (08) 8626 1127
- Royal Flying Doctor Phone 1800 733 772 (doctor on call 24/7)

Police or other emergencies

- Call 000
- Wirrulla Police Station Phone (08) 8626 8011

Other information

- During the Tourism Season from April 1 – October 31, our Reserve Host Volunteers may contact you in the week ahead of your booked visit to check in with you and answer any questions you may have about the reserve or your visit.
- Please call Nature Foundation's Adelaide office on (08) 8340 2880 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm for any other queries.

Nature Drives

Multiple Nature Drive loops are a great way to explore Hiltaba. These follow former station tracks from when the Nature Reserve was a pastoral property. These re-purposed tracks are suitable as self-drive tours so that visitors, with suitable vehicles, can enjoy the different landscapes and views offered by the reserve.

The Nature Drives are suitable for properly equipped 4WD vehicles and are fully signposted, with track notes available from Staff or Reserve Host Volunteers. Off track driving is strictly prohibited.

Drive information

- The drives are fully signposted, and track notes are available to borrow from the Visitor Reception (or you can download PDFs).
- Some of the drives are accessed through locked gates, with keys available from Homestead at the time of your visit.
- Staff or Reserve Hosts will also provide important information about safety considerations as you set off — please take note of these!

At Hiltaba Nature Reserve you will need keys for:

- Pine Well - Narlaby Nature Drive — pick up and return to Visitor Reception
- Mt St Mungo Nature Drive — pick up and return to Visitor Reception

Important information for our drives

- Keep to the tracks as marked with the appropriate Nature Drive signs indicated on the track notes.
- **Off track driving is strictly prohibited.**
- **Avoid driving on boggy roads and if you get stuck, do not leave your vehicle.**
- The Nature Drives are suitable for properly equipped 4WD vehicles. If driving an AWD vehicle, check its suitability with Staff or Reserve Host volunteers at the Homestead before heading out on the tracks.
- **For your safety and the safety of our wildlife keep vehicle speed below 40km on all Nature Reserve tracks at all times.**

Mt St Mungo

- Approximately 75kms round trip from Hiltaba Homestead, excluding side trip.
- Allow 4-5 hours.

Starting from the Homestead and turning east for approx. 7.5kms along the Hiltaba-Iron Knob road, this drive takes visitors into the north-east regions of the Reserve. It passes by the Pretty Point campground and the adjacent Betty and Bob Lewis walking trail, then winding through mallee woodland, past the historic Peeweena Dam and yard, before climbing over a saddle and heading north for about 3.5kms to the foot of Mt St Mungo.

A 45-minute walk to the summit provides spectacular views. To the north is Lake Acraman formed by a meteor strike around 580 million years ago. The route returns southwards through saltbush plains, re-joining the main road approx. 23kms from the Homestead.

Pine Well — Narlaby

- Approximately 79kms round trip from Hiltaba Homestead, excluding side trip.
- Allow 4 hours.

Starting from the Homestead and turning east for approx 28.5kms along the Hiltaba-Iron Knob road, this drive takes visitors into the south-east regions of the Reserve.

The route visits the large windmill and yards at Pine Well, winding westwards through woodlands and former sheep paddocks to the historic Narlaby wells. For a few kilometres it follows the southern boundary fence with the Gawler Ranges National Park, before turning northwards to link with the Mark Bonnin walking trail near twin waterfalls (geologically impressive, though usually dry), in hilly country near the centre of the Reserve.

The route then heads back towards the Homestead, past one of its main water sources, through saltbush plains, ending near the Hiltaba woolshed, 2kms from the Homestead.

The Lookout

- Approximately 35kms round trip from the Homestead if undertaken as a separate drive but can be combined as a side trip with either of the previous 2 drives.
- Allow up to 1 hour for the 5.4km return 4WD section, with time to walk around the Lookout site.

This drive is a short, but steep, rocky route for about half its 2.7km length; use of 4WD low range is recommended when the climbing section begins. With some short walking around the summit area, visitors can enjoy spectacular views of the Reserve in all directions.

North Wall

- Approximately 45km trip from Hiltaba Homestead, including 37.3kms off road.
- Allow 3 hours.

The drive proper starts just off the main Wirrulla-Kingoonya road, and ends after 36kms, at a junction with the Iron Knob-Hiltaba road, approx 7.5kms from the Homestead.

The drive passes the Gnamma holes, natural cavities which were an important water source for Aboriginal people. A steep, rocky climb, about 1km in length, requires a 4WD vehicle, and use of low range is strongly recommended. A few kilometres further, you will arrive at the start of a short walk (30 minutes return), to the North Wall — one of three such massive structures on Hiltaba. All are thought to have been built by the Fitzgerald brothers, who leased the property during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The drive continues past Trump Dam, an old dray, bluebush, mallee woodland and bullock bush.

Peeweena Track

- Approximately 77kms round trip from Homestead including 53kms off-road.
- Allow a full day, especially if you plan to undertake the two walks accessed from this drive — North Wall, approx. 30 minutes return, and Mt St Mungo, approx. 90 minutes return. The drive also offers a side trip of around 5.4kms, towards its end, to The Lookout (see above).

This drive from the Homestead combines the first half of the North Wall drive (including the steep, rocky 4WD section), and the second half of the Mt St Mungo drive — both described above. It passes through changing landscapes and gives you the opportunity to explore the rock holes, North Wall, take in the views to Lake Acraman and Mt St Mungo, view historical sites and access lookouts.

Chiltadinna Track

- Approximately 50kms round trip from Homestead, including 43kms off-road.
- Allow three hours.

Starting from the Homestead turn right towards Wirrulla and this track turns right and winds its way mostly within the former Chiltadinna paddock (over 65km square).

It passes through a variety of landscapes including Mallee Woodlands, Black Oak stands and Bluebush plains. The drive traverses large sections of the boundary fence with Kondoolka Station and there are several fine viewpoints.

How much does a Nature Drive cost?

- Pricing is available through our booking site with payment per vehicle and by number of days you wish to access drives: www.visit.naturefoundation.org.au
- You can Book Nature Drives when you book your accommodation, or you can pay at staff or our Reserve Host volunteers at Visitor Reception in the Hiltaba Homestead Precinct via our booking system on site during hours listed on the Visitor Information board.

Can we add extra vehicles to our booking when we arrive?

- Yes, and you will need to pay the additional fee through our online booking system at Visitor Reception

Can I do a Nature Drive if I don't have a 4WD?

- No. Nature Drives are accessible to 4WD vehicles only.

How long should we stay for?

- You can visit for a day drive or stay longer, depending on your interest and other travel plans. We suggest 2-3 days to enjoy the different parts of the reserve, including our Nature Walks, or longer if you want to unwind and relax in nature and explore more slowly.

Walking Trails

Hiltaba's Five Founders' Walking Trails are a paradise for hikers and birdwatchers. The five trails range in length from 2km to 14km and cater for a variety of fitness levels. They offer breathtaking views and ample opportunities for photography, bird watching and viewing spring flowers.

Trail notes are available at the start of each walk.

The Betty and Bob Lewis Walking Trail around Pretty Point is about 2km in length. It climbs on a marked track around the stunning granite boulders at Pretty Point. The gentle climb is rewarded with views across the rugged rocky landscapes back to the homestead and beyond, towards Mount Hiltaba and Barber Hill.

The Warren Bonython Walking Trail is a 10km loop. It commences behind the Hiltaba homestead and includes a steep climb to the summit of Mt Hiltaba (424m) along rocky creek beds, ledges, and slopes. Stop for a break at the summit and enjoy the magnificent views south to the Gawler Ranges National Park and the salt pans towards Wirrulla before commencing the rugged descent over rocky terrain. The last section returns to the homestead along the mallee slopes on the eastern flanks of Mt Hiltaba.

The Barbara Hardy Walking Trail is a 7km loop trail. This well-defined trail commences approximately 6km from the homestead (out past the airstrip) and follows a rough vehicle track for about a kilometre before climbing to a rocky ridge with views back to the homestead to the west, and towards Lake Acraman to the east. The descent passes a spectacular rock wall before returning to the trailhead.

For a longer walk, you can start from the Shearers Quarters and walk the 5km along the vehicle track to the start point. (i.e. an additional 10km.)

The Mark Bonnin Walking Trails provide an opportunity for walkers of various abilities to walk either the green route of 3km, the blue route of 9km or the more rugged red route of 11km. The trailhead (starting point) for all three walks is approximately 15km from the Hiltaba homestead accessed by a short vehicular detour off the Iron Knob/Yardea road.

These trails provide the opportunity to experience different landscapes at Hiltaba: open grasslands, casuarina, mallee, and bullock bush stands and rocky gorges. While the Lookout (a high point from which large areas of the Nature Reserve are laid out before you), is only accessible via the red walk, all walkers can climb or drive to the Lookout for an opportunity to experience its magnificent views.

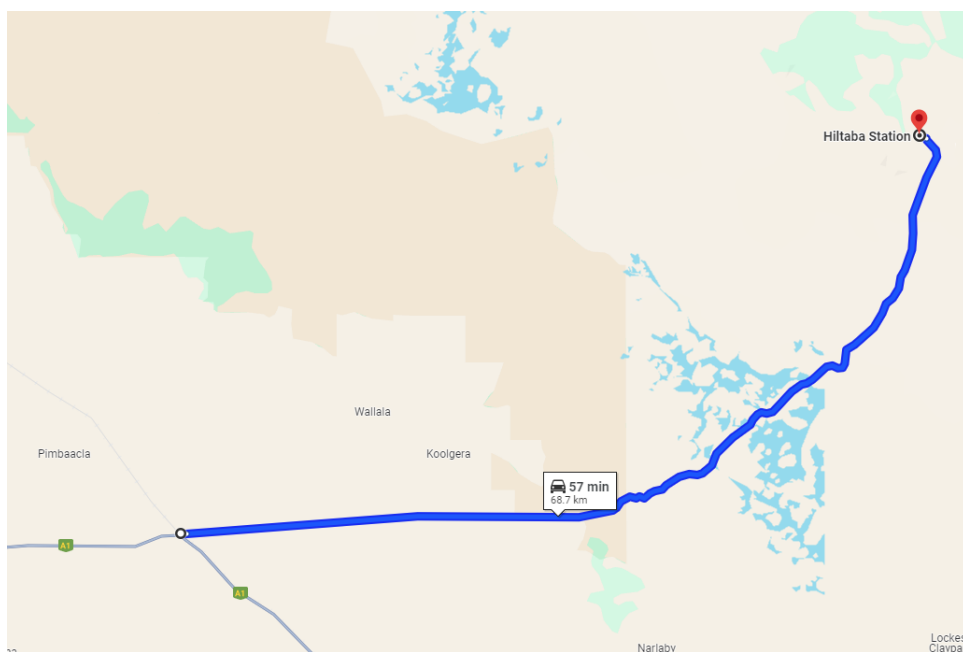
The David Cleland Walking Trail is a linear walk of 7km (14km return). The trail commences at the Shearers Quarters and follows the wide valley dotted with wombat burrows and includes gentle climbs on the smooth sheets of Hiltaba Granite. A gentle climb through mallee slopes passes over a ridge to the Pretty Point Camping Area with its distinctive Granite boulders.

This walk can be extended by including the Betty and Bob Lewis Walking Trail, before returning to the Shearers Quarters. You can also detour to an important geological feature (Geosite 966).

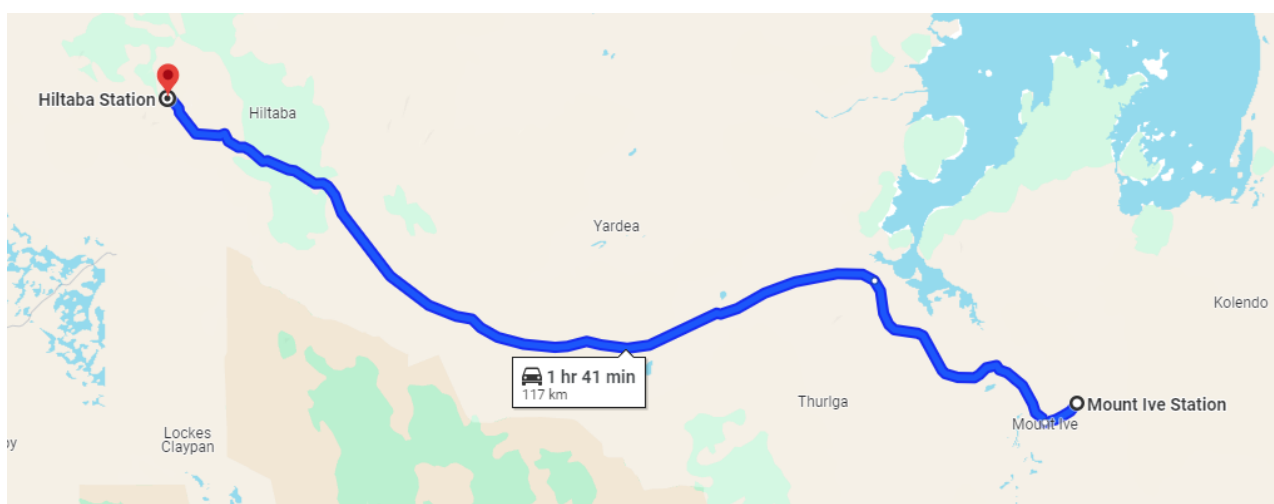
If you only plan to walk one way, ensure you have arranged a vehicle pick-up at Pretty Point.

Getting there — Map and Environs

From Wirrulla



From Mt Ive



Quick reference — Useful information for planning your travel

www.naturefoundation.org.au

<http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads>

[North West Pastoral District Forecast \(bom.gov.au\)](http://www.bom.gov.au)

[Central Eyre & Gawler Ranges | Eyre Peninsula](#)

[Outback safety & travelling in arid landscapes](#)

Hiltaba Homestead Precinct — Map

