

SACRAMENTO TRAIL (*Sardinia Bay Nature Reserve*)

The trail of about 8 km traverses the 320 ha ***Sardinia Bay Nature Reserve*** proclaimed in 1980. The walk starts at the west end of ***Schoenmakerskop*** and follows the coast to ***Sardinia Bay***, returning via bridle-tracks and a path along the top of the vegetated dunes. The trail is suitable for reasonably fit persons who are advised to walk in a group, wear stout shoes and take a sunhat and drinking-water.

DOGS are allowed on the lower section of the trail which follows the coastline to Sardinia Bay.

At ***Schoenmakerskop*** a ***bronze cannon*** points towards the wreck site of the Portuguese galleon ***Sacramento***, which foundered on 30 June 1647. Of the 72 survivors who reached the beach and then set out to walk the 1 300 km back to Mozambique, but only nine reached ***Delagoa Bay*** (Maputo), on 5 January 1648. Only four survived to sail back to ***Goa*** (Far East). In 1977 local divers salvaged 40 bronze cannon from the wreck, including the one on display.

From the cannon the trail follows the coastline where numerous freshwater seepages can be seen. At the ***Sacramento monument*** one of two tall white beacons which mark the beginning of the adjacent ***Sardinia Bay Marine Reserve*** can be seen. This reserve was proclaimed in 1974, and extends to ***Bushy Park*** in the west. The marine reserve covers the area from the high-water mark to 1km out to sea. Removal of marine life, including angling, is prohibited.

Sardinia Bay is the source of a 7 000 ha ***drift-sands*** area stretching to Humewood. In the late 1800's the area was stabilized by dumping the city's refuse onto the dunes. Nevertheless natural processes are continually attempting to re-establish the drift-sands. Any disturbance of the sensitive pioneer dune vegetation, either by foot, vehicle or animals, will lead to "blow-outs". These "blow outs" will eventually endanger roads and buildings.

On the trail at the far end of the sandy bay aptly named ***Cannon Bay***, are the ***ruins*** of a mill used to crush seashells. The rocky strata along the coastline are of the ***Table Mountain sandstone group*** and along this stretch of coast they jut into the sea, creating sheltered gulleys that teem with juvenile ***fish***. The terrestrial plant community among the rocks is able to cope with sea spray and thin soils; ***Gazania*** and ***Tetragonia*** are among these more common plants. Out to sea ***gannets*** and ***dolphins*** can often be seen.

Sardinia Bay is a popular ***bathing beach*** with picnic facilities, ablution block with drinking-water and a lifesaving club. Views of the adjacent ***Sylvic Nature Reserve*** and ***Bushy Park*** to the west can be seen from above the bathing beach. Wind stunted vegetation with trees such as the Milkwood grow into low bushes and form part of the dense dune scrub whilst on plateau areas fynbos is becoming established where extensive stands of alien ***Rooikrans*** and ***Port Jackson*** have been cleared. Good views of the coastline are obtained from the inland section of the trail which meanders through fynbos to Schoenmakerskop.

NOTE: Use of the area is entirely at your own risk