

CORNER COUNTRY LANDSCAPES

The Simpson-Strzelecki Dunefields Bioregion extends from the Northern Territory, through South Australia, into Queensland and New South Wales.

It has been suggested that this is the largest example of a linear sand dune environment in the world. High dunes, varying from 50 metres to 500 metres apart, are interspersed by claypans and ephemeral lake beds. Most are stable and more than 30,000 years old. The original source of sand is believed to be the Great Dividing Range.



Previous panel: Dunefield, Theldarpa
 Below: Beefwood tree, Pimpara Lake
 Right to left: parallel dunes, Pimpara Lake
 wild dog fence, Aboriginal fireplace,
 Theldarpa



The dunes of the Simpson-Strzelecki Dunefields Bio-region are located mainly in the western end of Sturt National Park, and parts of station properties extending to the east.

The soil of the dune crests and slopes is a red predominantly quartz sand, very fine and extremely poor in nutrients.

Flat swale areas of sand and clay lie between successive dunes.

The Wild Dog Fence,

viewed at Cameron Corner, crosses the east-west running dunes. Originally the fence was built along the state borders to keep rabbits out of New South Wales.

Today rabbits still pose a threat to vegetation in the area.

Major creek systems tend to drain to the west towards Lake Callabonna and Lake Frome, with others draining locally into terminal salinas or salt lakes.

There is archeological evidence of early Aboriginal occupation amongst the dunes. Remnant tools and fireplaces have been found adjacent to clay-pans and swamps. Trade with tribes of the Flinders Ranges was made possible by following the creeks and water-courses to the west.

Afghan Cameleers also followed the creeks, particularly the Yandama, carrying supplies to the Albert Goldfields during the 1880s.



Left to right
Needle wood flowers, Pimpara Lake-
bearded dragon, Pimpara Lake, red-necked
avocets, Pimpara Lake,
yellow top daisies, Wild Dog Fence



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Rainfall is relatively rare. Even so, a very rich collection of native flora grows across the Simpson-Strzelecki Dune-fields.

The region also shares a number of trees and shrubs with other areas. These include sand-hill wattles which are common on the slopes of dunes, mulga, needle-wood, whitewood and beefwood.

Shrub species such as cassia, emu-bush and hop bush are also common

throughout the region. Flood-out from creeks supports grass and perennial plant growth, important for sustaining both native fauna and cattle and sheep.

In spring the sand-dunes resemble a carpet of colour. Wildflowers such as yellow top daisies and poached eggs are common sights.

It is believed that around forty animal species, including kangaroos and other mammals, lizards and

snakes, have been found in the bioregion.

Unfortunately some are endangered, while the burrowing bettong and the pig-faced bandicoot are extinct in the area.

The sand dunes support some rare birds including Eyrean grasswrens which are found in cane grass on dunes. During wet periods itinerant waterbirds breed on the ephemeral swamps and salt lakes, moving on when the water dries up.