

Moon over the Murchison

Astronomical and Botanical Explorations at Mount Singleton

Ninghan Pastoral Station, Murchison Region, Western Australia. 20–26 May, 2007

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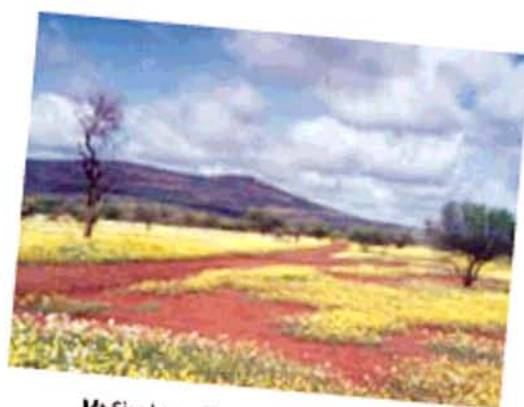
Explore the southern sky in all its glory with astronomers from Perth Observatory on this astronomical adventure to Mount Singleton, south of Paynes Find, in WA's Murchison region. Mount Singleton rises 350 m above the surrounding landscape of Ninghan Station, giving unobstructed 360 degree views. Meteorological observations suggest that this locality has, on average, little rain and cloud. Both its height, the climate data and its isolation from human activity indicate that Mt Singleton may be an excellent location for optical astronomical observing.

Clear outback skies provide optimum viewing conditions and give astronomers the opportunity to conduct experiments to evaluate the suitability of this location for observing. A system of telescopes inside a portable shelter will be erected on Mount Singleton and a small team of expedition members will make measurements throughout the night to evaluate the suitability of this site for astronomical observing.

In addition to the experimental work, expedition members will be given guided tours of the night sky. Stars, constellations, star clusters, gaseous nebulae, moon and planets will be visible through the latest astronomical viewing equipment.

The Murchison region is renowned for its wildflowers and during the day expeditioners will search the landscape for priority flora species. Daphne Edinger from LANDSCOPE Expeditions will lead explorations for threatened flora on Ninghan station and the surrounding countryside. Participants will also get the opportunity to discover the views from Mount Singleton.

Participants will also spend time with Peter Curry, who has a wealth of experience in the area, in particular Ninghan Station. Peter's local knowledge will be of great interest as he will provide insight into the local environment and the fascinating history of the area and highlight some of its hidden natural and cultural wonders. Peter was instrumental in the establishment of the indigenous protected area on Ninghan Station.



Mt Singleton. Photo - Daphne Edinger

20–26 May 2007

Fieldwork

The primary focus of the expedition is the collection of astronomical data for the Perth Observatory. Small teams will carry out overnight astronomical experiments and observations to determine the suitability of Mount Singleton as a site for astronomical viewing. Participants are not expected to work every night and plenty of rest time has been scheduled. During each day a number of natural and cultural wonders can be discovered around the station. Daphne will conduct botanical activities and lead searches for populations of rare and poorly-known plants in the area. Peter will lead bushwalks and conduct activities looking at the environmental, historical and cultural significance of the area.

Conditions

Travel will be by air-conditioned vehicle from Perth to Ninghan Station via the Great Northern Highway. Ninghan Station is 50 km south of Paynes Find. Basic accommodation in dongas will be provided at Ninghan Station with access to facilities. Meals will be provided but you may be required to help with some chores. The weather in May is mild with day time temperatures in the low twenties. It will be chilly at night, and can get down as low as one or two degrees. You will need warm clothing for the overnight astronomical work.

Related interests

Astronomy, botany, wildlife ecology, Aboriginal culture, history, bird watching, photography and bushwalking.

Departure point

The expedition will start and finish in Perth.

Inclusions

Transport to and from Ninghan station from departure point, station accommodation, most meals, research equipment and supplies, duffel bag, thermal mug, stubby holder, volunteer hat, written briefing, field equipment (except personal items such as sleeping bags and binoculars), expedition diary and report.

Not included

Travel to and from departure point
Linen/sleeping bag/pillow
Alcoholic beverages and other personal expenses
Medical treatment or emergency evacuation procedures
Some refreshments en route

Contribution (includes GST)

\$2420