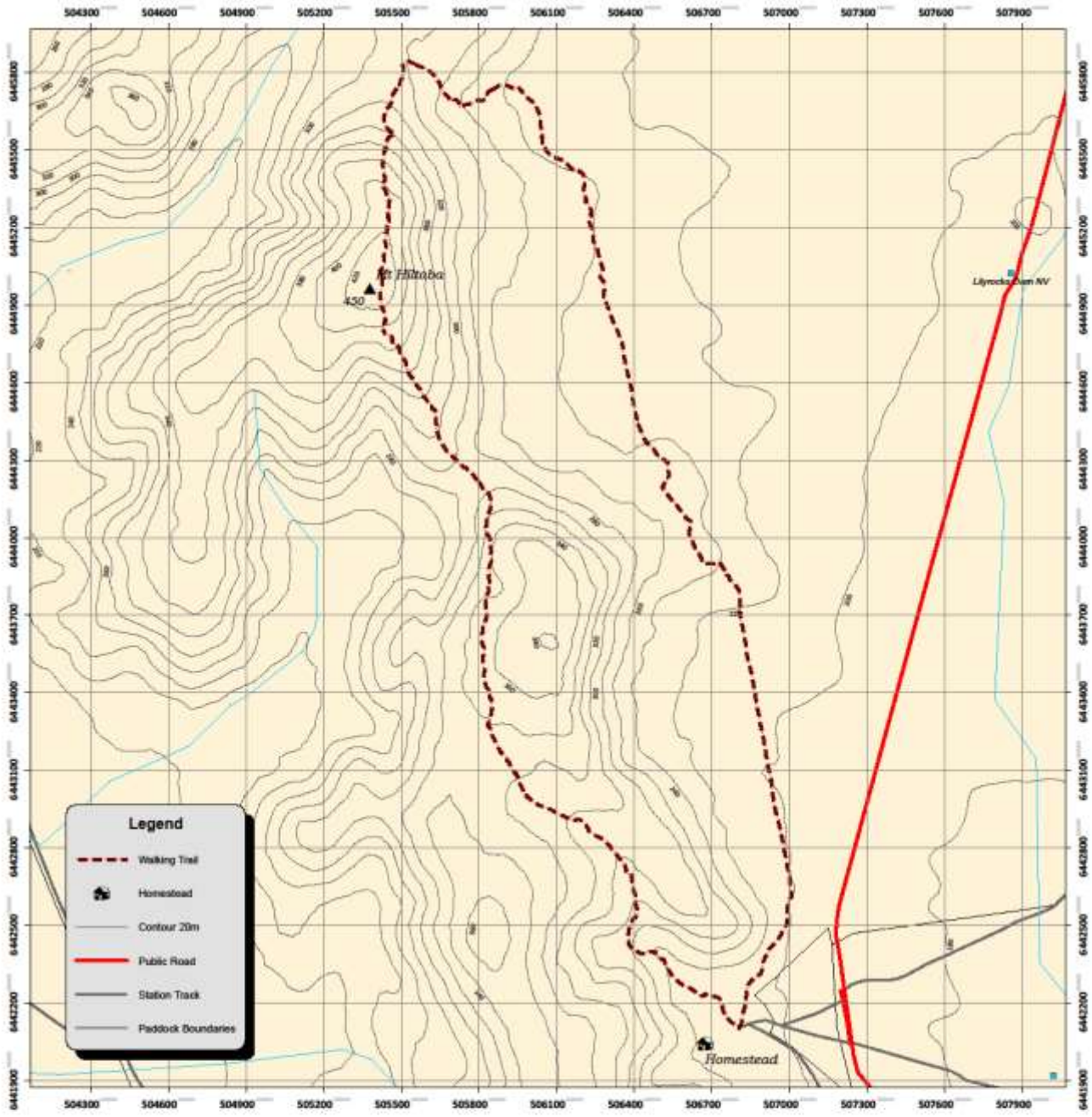
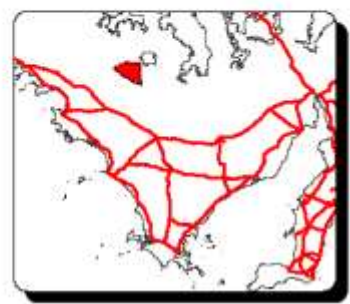


# WARREN BONYTHON WALKING TRAIL (LOOP VIA MT HILTABA)



By Alex Nankivell  
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## Warren Bonython Loop via Mount Hiltaba – Trail Notes

All walkers must register before departing from Hiltaba Homestead

One way 10km loop walk – allow 5 hours

- **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 50 to 500 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 walk end at Hiltaba Homestead.
- **Mobile phone coverage** - Telstra mobile and limited OPTUS 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.**
- **The Walk** -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). The trail then veers to the right (north) through scrub with some spectacular views of the plains to the north and west. Follow the trail markers and arrows across the saddle and up the steep climb to Mt Hiltaba (450 metres above sea level). At the cairn you will be rewarded with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Again follow the trail markers and arrows north, on the steep descent through granite boulders and outcrops to the creek below. The track now turns to the right (south east) and follows the plains and crosses some spurs over scrub and granite outcrops to a final walk across the plain back to the Hiltaba Homestead.

## Distances referenced are distances back to Hiltaba Homestead (starting point).

**\*\* Register and pick up a map for this walk at the Homestead garage.**

1. From Hiltaba Homestead to the start of the walk is 500 metres. Walk west along the vehicle track, in the direction of the old power lines towards the ruin; past the generator shed and workshop to the base of the waterfall (after rain the normally dry gorge has a spectacular waterfall). Note the old reservoir/dam built to provide the station with stock water.
2. Follow the arrows and trail markers up the rocky valley along the left hand (southern) side of the reservoir/dam and creek.
3. The trail continues up a picturesque creek line; follow the trail markers and arrows. After rain the many waterholes are soon filled with tadpoles and frogs (Desert Burrowing Frog – *Neobatrachus pictus*). There is a good photo opportunity as you look back along the creek towards the Homestead and old dam.
4. At the 8.5 km marker the trail now leaves the creekline in a northerly direction (right) along the north western side of the ridge past a large Black Oak (*Casuarina pauper*) growing out of the surrounding limestone
5. Grasswrens (*Amytornis textilis myall*) - Western Grasswren (Gawler Ranges) may be heard moving about between the Spinifex (*Triodia* species) in this area.
6. 8 km marker, 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 7.5 km 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 the 7 km marker, the ascent to the top of Mt Hiltaba starts from the saddle. From the saddle head straight up Mt Hiltaba, picking the best way through the spinifex (*Triodia* species) till you reach the cairn. There are no arrows through this section of the climb.
9. 6 km marker At Mt Hiltaba summit (elevation 450 metres) 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. The Gawler Ranges Grevillea (*Grevillea Parrallelinervis*) are common near the summit.
10. The trail now heads in a northerly direction down the ridge. Follow the arrows as you descend. Note the upright boulders on the side of the next range on your left 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. 5km marker At the creekline, turn right, the trail now heads south-east towards the plain
12. 4 km marker. This is a 4WD access point. Watch out for Southern Hairy Nose Wombats (*Lasiorhinus Latifrons*), particularly later in the day, as you traverse the plains.

13. Continue south now towards a rocky outcrop. Trail goes through a lightly wooded area and across more granite outcrops.

3 km marker. Head down on to the plain.

14. 2 km marker you will see a large expanse of thick Bluebush (*Maireana Pyramidata*) adjacent the road.

15. Walk across the plain following the trail markers and past a stand of Black Oaks (*Casuarina pauper*) and through an area of many old discarded items from the old Hiltaba Homestead that provide an insight into former station life including cast iron beds and old car parts.

16. Cross the creekline and you will see Mt Hiltaba Homestead.

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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 440,000 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<sup>2</sup> 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](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            | distance in metres |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Hiltaba Homestead                        | 53H             | 0506801<br>6442108 | 10000              |
| Base of Falls and Dam wall               | 53H             | 0506478<br>6442390 | 9500               |
| Top of Waterfall                         | 53H             | 0506401<br>6442543 | 9180               |
| Exit Creek here, walk North West         | 53H             | 0505986<br>6442998 | 8350               |
| Large Black Oak                          | 53H             | 0505840<br>6443289 |                    |
| View to Cairn on top of Mt Hiltaba       | 53H             | 0505842<br>6443390 | 8000               |
| Cross Creekline                          | 53H             | 0505842<br>6443828 | 7460               |
| Saddle before ascent to Mount Hiltaba    | 53H             | 0505785<br>6444232 | 7000               |
| Mt Hiltaba Summit                        | 53H             | 0505427<br>6444998 | 5950               |
| Creek Junction, walk East down the creek | 53H             | 0505546<br>6445837 | 4900               |
| Leave Creek, Walk South                  | 53H             | 0506016<br>6445726 | 5500               |
| Hiltaba Homestead                        | 53H             | 0506801<br>6442108 | 0                  |