



This is the fifth in the great outback tracks of South Australia series and the first of a 2-part series on Goog's Track and the areas surrounding it.

To travel Goog's Track takes you to quite a different area of South Australia, the far west coast. More associated with the pristine waters of Eyre Peninsula and whale-watching in the Great Australian Bight, this is also the stepping off point for the now famous Goog's Track. The track is usually travelled from south to north starting 36km north of Ceduna, continuing north traversing many sandhills until reaching the Trans-Continental rail line west of Tarcoola.

In the main, it is a narrow, single lane sandy track that many liken to the Simpson Desert. It is probably not a bad test to undertake before a Simpson crossing. It may well whet the appetite for more, or help you decide that 1000+ sandhill crossings are a little more than you can bear. This is definitely high clearance 4WD territory so don't attempt it in any other type of vehicle. Camper trailers can traverse the track, however, difficulties can be encountered getting over some sandhills. This is definitely NOT a place to take a caravan.

Although the track itself is relatively short (150km) and can be traversed in a day, a couple of days at least should be set aside to cover this distance. Just to get to the start is an 800km trek from Adelaide, and once Goog's Track has been traversed, there are some major decisions about where to from there.

This is a journey requiring at least a week to allow full enjoyment of the environment and to ensure that some of the beautiful spots along the way are not missed.





What is Goog's Track?

Goog's Track is the result of the dream of one man, Stanley Gilbert John Denton, born to a west coast family in 1938. According to his wife, Jenny, the name Goog was bestowed on him early in life as a result of him selling eggs for his Mum.

As was often the case at the time, he left school at the age of 12 and worked with his father on the family farm at Denial Bay. After marrying Jenny in 1965, they moved to a property at Kalanbi, north of Ceduna, which they named "Lone Oak".

The property was originally 5800 acres of scrub just north of the dog fence with thick bush and sandhills extending north to the east-west railway line. A family home was built and over the next 5 years Martin (nicknamed Dinger), Debbie and Jeffrey were born.

Unfortunately, a car accident claimed the life of Martin in 1993, aged 27, and Goog died in 1996, aged 58. In the early years whilst making improvements to the property a nagging thought came constantly to Goog's mind as he gazed northward - "what's out there?"

Eventually, curiosity got the better of him and a plan was hatched to push a track northward. Goog's Track had begun. From 1973 the track inched forward, old tractors doing the hard work mainly on weekends with the whole family and often a number of friends in tow. Later a grader was purchased and at times a bulldozer was used to get through difficult areas.

For 3 years the battle against the sandhills and scrub continued until, in August 1976, the rail line was reached. Goog's dream had been realised.

What's Goog's track is today

Goog's track today is still a narrow, sandy, one-lane track that weaves across the sandhills. It is open to the public and is part of the Yumbarra Conservation Park and Yellabinna Regional Reserve.

Goog's wife Jenny has written an excellent account of this amazing feat also documenting in detail the lifestyle the family lived in this isolated area.

"My Memories of Pushing Goog's Track" is an excellent read and if planning to travel the track gives a superb background that will enhance your experience. It can be purchased at www.googstrack.com.



Getting There

From Port Augusta, it's on to the Eyre Highway for a 470km journey to Ceduna. This is a good place to stop, fuel up and ensure you have all the provisions and water needed to travel Goog's Track and beyond.

But, don't rush to get there as some interesting and beautiful spots between Port Augusta and Ceduna are not to be missed.

Places to visit along Goog's Track:

1. Kimba

155km west of Port Augusta. Have your photo taken with the big galah.

2. Gawler Ranges National Park

the 48km dirt road into this park heads north from the Eyre Highway just west of Wudinna. There are campgrounds within the park but facilities are very limited. Self-sufficiency in everything is the key. Interesting rock formations like the Organ Pipes are well worth seeing. Give yourself a couple of days to have a good look around this park.



3. Pildappa Rock

Take the track from Minnipa for 15km to see this large, wave-shaped rock, likened to Wave Rock in Western Australia. A campground is available right at the base of this natural wonder.

4. Streaky Bay

Stunning beauty and a fisher's paradise, Streaky Bay is well worth the 70km detour off the Eyre Highway. Your trip to Ceduna can then continue along the Flinders Highway for the 110km along the coast to Ceduna. It is worth staying a few days here, even if fishing is not your thing. Around 60km south of Streaky Bay is the Point Labatt sea lion colony - well worth the visit, especially if there are children in the group. The Streaky Bay Caravan Park is right on the beach and a top place to stay.

Travelling Goog's Track

Once you leave Ceduna you need to be completely self-contained as, depending on where you head after completing the track, there are no significant services for at least 300km, that being Kingoonya. This is a tiny settlement and even though fuel is sold at the hotel, it would be wise not to rely on it.

The next reliable fuel stop is at Glendambo, 43km further on. Also, keep in mind that fuel consumption will be significantly higher than normal due to the many dune crossings and the possible need to use low range.

Key Points Along The Track

The distance shown is from Ceduna. Follow the Eyre Highway from Ceduna towards Western Australia.

• 4km - Turn off to Goog's Track

Leave the Eyre Highway and head north on Kalanbi Road leading to Goog's Track.

• 27km - Dog Fence

At this point, you go through the dog fence. Ensure any gates are closed behind you. There is a track along the fence. It is an offence to travel along this track and on a past trip, our group noticed traps set very close to the gate. This is not a good place to roam around, especially with children or dogs. Baits are also laid in the area. This is the official start of Goog's Track.



• **29km - Lone Oak Homestead**

The original Denton home is to the left of the track.

• **78km - Goog and Dinger Memorial**

Stop and have a look at the memorial cairn erected in memory of the fantastic work of Goog and Dinger in constructing the track (31 34 02S, 133 55 43E).

It is at this point you take a track to the east for a few kilometres that leads to Goog's Lake. This usually dry salt lake is a good camping spot, the only recognised one along the track. There are no facilities but plenty of room to set up camp.

• **151km - Turnoff to Mount Finke**

Mount Finke is 6km to the west and worth a trip in (30 55 23S, 134 01 32E). You can take an alternative 7km track back out to Goog's Track that will have you 4km north of the first turnoff.



- **169km - Dog Fence**

You will come to the dog fence at this point where the track turns to the east.

- **173km - Dog Fence gate**

Cross the dog fence at this point and head north towards the rail line.

- **188km - Malbooma and the Trans-Continental rail line**

The track has been completed and now it's time to decide where to from here.

Now that you know what to expect, check out Part 2 for travel advice for Goog's track.