

Western Australia – The top five picks from a grey nomad

Edith McNally

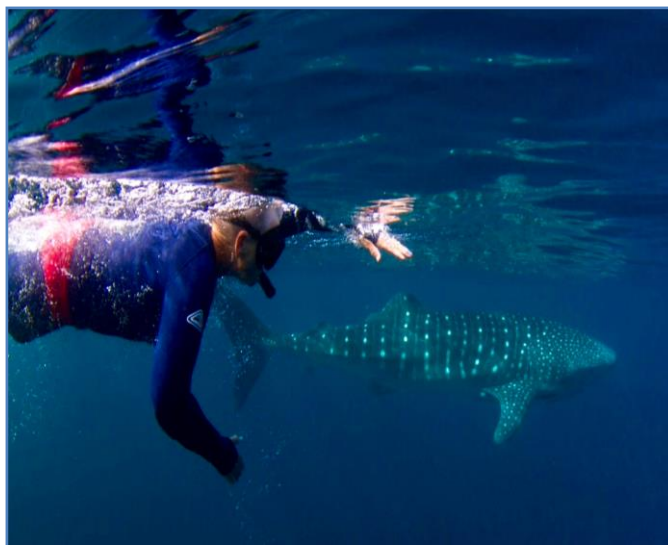
Ron and I are just resettling at home after 3½ years in our caravan checking out Australia. Western Australia is a beautiful state with varied opportunities to explore both cultural and natural beauty as well as experience adventure and thrills. Over an eight month wander we both selected our top five experiences which I will share using my new and developing post-retirement passion for watercolour travel sketching, which has proved to be both great fun and a wonderful way to focus attention on what we are actually seeing.

My top 5 experiences/places included:

1. Swimming with whale sharks

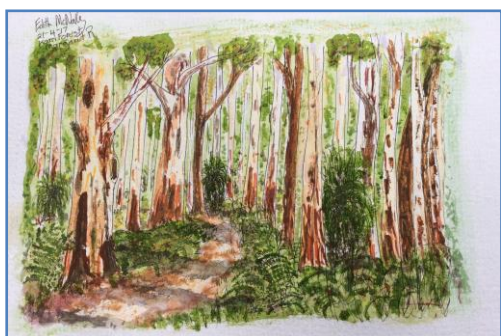
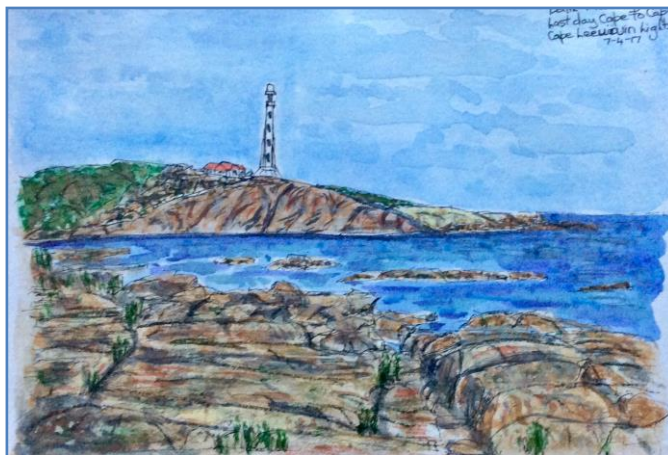
Without a doubt swimming with whale sharks in Exmouth was the most exhilarating experience I had. This is seasonal (August-October) and should be booked well in advance through a provider that has a spotter plane, provides all gear, has multiple marine biologists to explain and show things, as well as others that assist in the water (we went with Kings and they were excellent).

Ron has Parkinson's and isn't a good swimmer but was assisted by a marine biologist with ten foot flippers that jet propelled him into the adventure of his life. The whale sharks are filter-feeders and are not dangerous, but they are massive and an encounter never to be forgotten. We also bought the \$60 underwater photo package and found it to be great value we could never do ourselves.



2. The 7 day 'Cape to Cape Walk' from Cape Naturalist to Cape Leeuwin

This was a wonderful self-guided walk supported by Cape to Cape Explorer Tours (info@capetocapetours.com.au) which organised accommodation, food and daily drop offs and pick-ups. A truly beautiful walk along the ocean's edge filled with stories of adventure and loss through shark attacks and cliff falls. A must for walkers of average fitness.



3. Northwest WA Sculpture parks at Northcliffe, Walpole and Lake Ballard north of Kalgoorlie

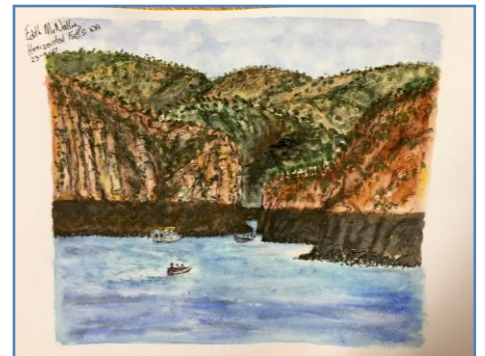
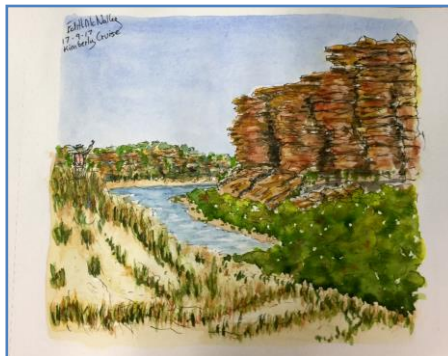
I know that clumping like this is cheating but all are amazing, especially the often-overlooked Anthony Gormley installation of 51 residents of nearby Menzies, made of titanium and set and scattered in the salt lake.

4. Kimberly Cruise

The Kimberley cruise from Darwin to Broome done with Coral

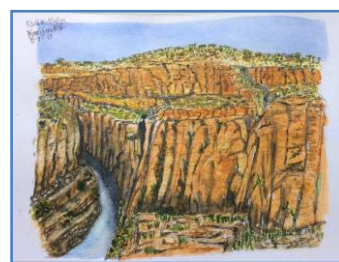
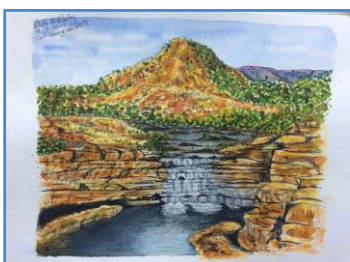
Expeditions. Reverse is also an option for this mid-priced (\$9600) all-inclusive expedition and education cruise. It offered 2-3 land expeditions on their 45 seat tender or two zodiacs every day.

The food was excellent as were the daily lectures delivered by two experts in Aboriginal art, geology, fauna, floral and history.



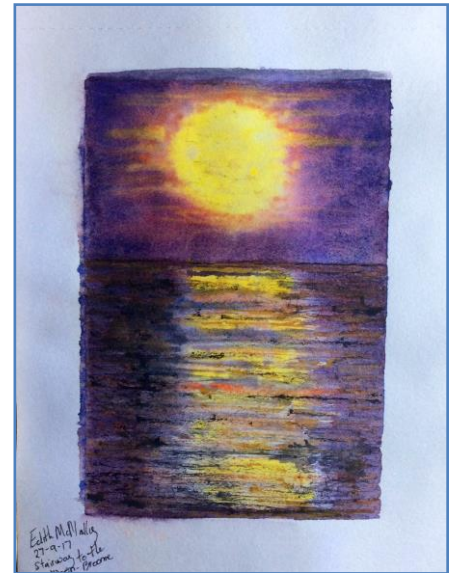
5. Gorge country – particularly Karijini NP, Kalbarri and the Gibb River Road.

Spectacular gorges are abundant throughout WA but they all come with enough trucks and dust to quicken the heart rate.



Ron's top 5 were:

1. Swimming with the whale sharks
2. Walking the 'Cape to Cape' Track
3. The Kimberly Cruise
4. Cable Beach and Broome and the 'Staircase to the Moon' (see sketches next page)
5. Geraldton Museum and the HMAS Sydney memorial



Contributor details

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Edith was with DET from 1972-2015 and served as principal at both Cranebrook High School (1994-1997) and Menai High School (1998-2015). She is a Life Member of the NSWSPC with major interests and contributions in VET, SRE and Assets Management. Since retirement Edith has been a 'Grey Nomad' towing a caravan throughout Australia and plans to settle back home in Stanwell Park at the end of 2018.