

AUSTRALIAN DESERT CLOSED FOR SUMMER



Tourists who travel to Australia will have to do without one big attraction of this continent, at least for the summer. Australian authorities have decided that the Simpson Desert will be closed from Dec 1 to Mar 15. During this period, the southern hemisphere's summer, temperatures are expected to reach 50 degrees of Celsius making the desert a very dangerous place to visit. The Simpson Desert Conservation Park occupies 3.6 million hectares of the outback and is popular for its dunes especially for the Big Red.

According to Trevor Naismith of the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage the closure is necessary to protect tourists as well as the emergency staff. People have died in the region in past.

Mr. Naismith says that the desert is both beautiful and harsh. Inexperienced tourists may easily get into troubles in here. Tourists often travel through the desert in hired four-wheel-drive vehicles though they lack the experience with this kind of vehicles. Traveling in the desert conditions is hard. There are no roads going through the Simpson Desert, just tracks made by those who searched for oil in the desert in 1960s and 1970s.

Tourists also do not realize the enormous distances involved. Cars can simply break down in the high temperatures. Therefore, it is necessary to be equipped with extra fuel and water in case of a breakdown. Those who disrespect the closure will have to pay a fine of \$1000. Of course only if they get caught.

Mr. Naismith says they want the tourists to have a positive experience with the park. He claims that tourists may have a safe and rewarding experience if they visit the Simpson Desert Conservation Park in cooler months. For those who will visit Australia during its summer there are of course alternatives like for instance the Dalhousie Springs complex.

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