



Staircase to the Moon

Staircase to the Moon is a natural phenomenon that occurs when the full moon rises over the exposed mudflats at Roebuck Bay, east of Broome (WA), at extremely low tide. It creates the optical illusion of a staircase reaching to the moon as the moon climbs above the horizon.

The illusion of a staircase is created by the light reflecting off the wet mudflats. Lines of mud run parallel to the shoreline. Between the low, exposed mud banks are shallow pools of water. The mudflats are exposed when, at certain times of the year, the tide is extremely low.

The staircase lasts for an hour or so and only occurs on three evenings a month for the months from March to October. Of course, if the sky is clouded, then there is no illusion.

The difference between high and low tide in Broome can be as much as four metres.

Photograph courtesy of Australia's North West Tourism <http://www.australiasnorthwest.com/en/Things_to_See_and_Do/Events/Staircase_to_the_moon/Pages/Staircase_to_the_Moon.aspx>