

LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

This PDF has been created for digital preservation. It may be used for research but is not suitable for other purposes. It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

Set in the Hamersley Range in the heart of the Pilbara, the expansive Karijini National Park offers spectacular, rugged scenery, ancient geological formations, a variety of arid-land ecosystems and a range of recreational experiences.

This is the State's second-biggest national park, encompassing some 627,445 hectares.

Massive mountains and escarpments rise out of the flat valleys. The high plateau is dissected by breathtaking gorges, and stony, tree-lined watercourses wind their way over the dusty plain.

This is an ancient part of the Earth. The slow process of erosion has carved the shape of the land out of rocks that are 2000 million years old, to form this intriguing landscape and complex ecology.

A variety of ecosystems are represented in the park. These range from precipitous gorges that shelter a remarkable range of plants and animals, to hills, ridges and plateaus covered with spinifex hummocks and scattered eucalypts. Low mulga woodlands and blankets of seasonal wildflowers bloom on lower slopes, valley plains and drainage lines.

Much of the southern half of the park is inaccessible. Visitors concentrate on the spectacular gorges in the north—with their rock pools, waterfalls and unique wildlife. Lookouts, walk trails, camping areas and information shelters are provided to make your visit safe, enjoyable and informative.

VISITOR FEES

Park visitor fees apply in Karijini National Park. They help maintain and enhance the park. Please pay your entry fees at the entrance stations or, before visiting the park, at Department of Conservation offices, or the local tourist bureau. At the camping areas, please deposit your camping fees in the collection boxes provided.

INFORMATION

Information on the natural and cultural history of the park is available from the Visitor Centre. Publications, souvenirs and locally crafted Aboriginal artefacts can be purchased. This temporary facility is open during the main visitor season, usually from April to October. A new permanent centre will be completed at the end of 2000.

CARE FOR THE PARK

Driving or walking on spinifex kills plants, upsetting an important habitat. Please drive, walk and camp only on the hard pan surfaces signposted for this purpose.

BE CAUTIOUS: Stay on roads and trails to protect the environment. Wet roads are slippery and easily damaged. Washouts can occur during heavy rain, resulting in road closures.

BE KIND: Do not disturb animals, plants, or rocks. Pets and firearms are not permitted.

BE WISE: Do not contaminate pools with soap, detergents and/or sunscreen, as they kill aquatic life.

BE CAREFUL: Avoid the risk of wildfire. Use the gas barbecues provided, or your portable cooking appliance. **Ground fires are not permitted.**

BE CLEAN: Go to the toilet before entering the gorges. Carry a rubbish bag and leave nothing but your footprints.



WARNING
BLUE ASBESTOS PRESENT
IN YAMPIRE GORGE

Asbestos dust may cause cancer when inhaled. Alternative park entry/exits are available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

National park rangers are always pleased to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. Do not hesitate to contact them if you require any information or assistance.

Karijini National Park

PO Box 29
TOM PRICE WA 6751
Telephone: (08) 9189 8157
Fax: (08) 9189 8104

Pilbara Regional Office

Department of Conservation
and Land Management
Mardie Road
Karratha Industrial Estate
PO Box 835
KARRATHA WA 6714
Telephone: (08) 9143 1488
Fax: (08) 9144 1118

Operational Headquarters

Department of Conservation
and Land Management
Dick Perry Avenue
KENSINGTON WA 6151
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
BENTLEY WA 6983
Telephone: (08) 9334 0333.

Visit CALM's NatureBase website at
<http://www.calm.wa.gov.au>

KARIJINI

N a t i o n a l P a r k



VISITOR INFORMATION & WALK TRAIL GUIDE



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

3/051-02/00-2/04

PAM01412

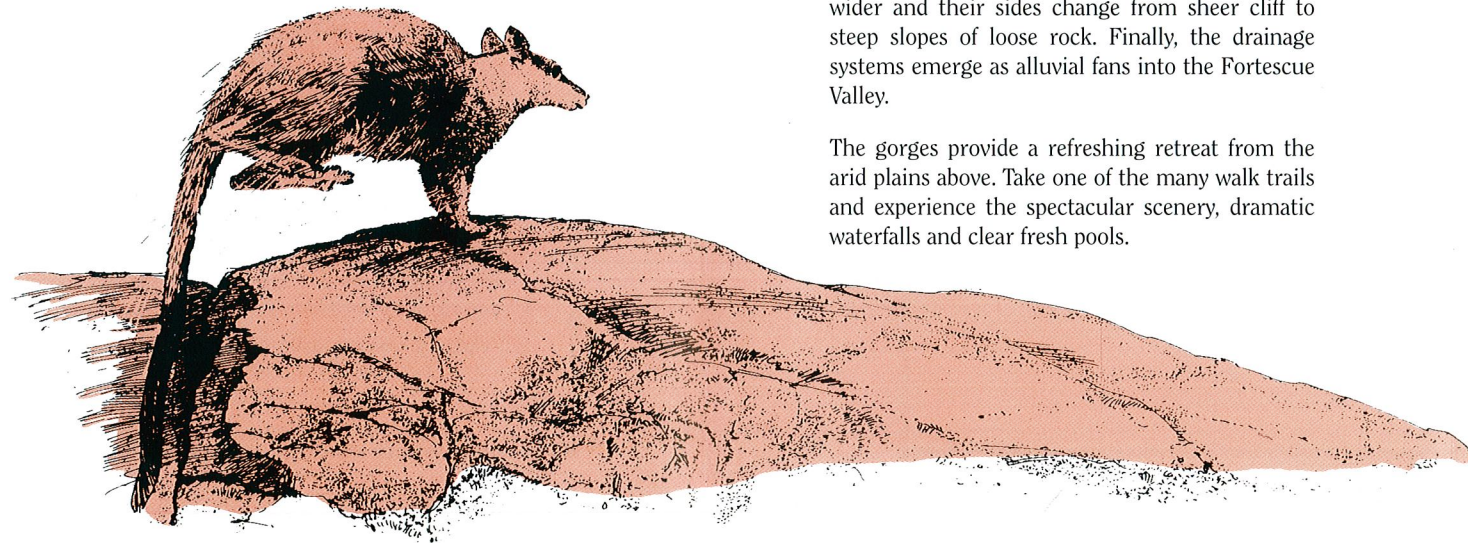
TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Banjima, Innawonga and Kurrama Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, call the Hamersley Range *Karijini*. The name of the park recognises the historic and continuing significance of the area to these people, and their involvement in park management.

Evidence of their ancestors' occupation dates back more than 20,000 years. During that period, Aboriginal land management practices such as 'fire stick farming', resulting in a diversity of vegetation types and stages of succession, have helped determine the nature of the plants and animals found in the park today.

CLIMATE

Situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, the park's climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. A highly variable, mainly summer rainfall of 250-350 millimetres, often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones, is accompanied by temperatures frequently topping 40° Celsius. The ideal times to visit the park are winter and spring. Winter days are warm and clear, but nights are cold and sometimes frosty.



GEOLOGY

The banded iron formations exposed in many of the rocks in and around the gorges originated more than 2,500 million years ago as iron and silica-rich sediment deposits that accumulated on an ancient sea-floor. Over millions of years, these iron-rich deposits were transformed by the pressure of further sediments laid down over them, forcing trapped water to be driven out and gradually turning the sediments into tough, well-bedded rock.

Horizontal compression later caused the rocks to buckle, developing numerous vertical cracks, before lifting to the surface to form dry land.

A sharp drop in sea-level caused the rivers to cut down rapidly through the land, creating sheer-sided gorges; this, combined with millions of years of erosion, has sculptured the rocks into the present landscape.

THE GORGES

In the north of the park, small creekbeds, hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year, suddenly plunge down chasms up to 100 metres deep. Farther downstream, the gorges become wider and their sides change from sheer cliff to steep slopes of loose rock. Finally, the drainage systems emerge as alluvial fans into the Fortescue Valley.

The gorges provide a refreshing retreat from the arid plains above. Take one of the many walk trails and experience the spectacular scenery, dramatic waterfalls and clear fresh pools.

WILDLIFE

Wildflowers vary in abundance with the seasons and from year to year, but there is always something interesting in flower. Many plants in the park bloom profusely after rains. In the cooler months, the land is covered with numerous yellow flowering sennas (cassias) and acacias, northern bluebells and purple mulla-mullas.

Birds are many and varied, especially in fringing vegetation along pools and streams. If you are observant, you may encounter red kangaroos, euros (kangaroos that are common to the rocky country), Rothschild's rock-wallaby, bats and dingoes.

Many species of native rodents and native marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara ningui are resident, but nocturnal and shy. Reptiles such as frogs, geckoes, goannas, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes abound within the park.

Two interesting wildlife homes are the large termite mounds, scattered throughout the hummock grasslands, and the rock piles of the pebble mound mouse. Look for mouse mounds on stony slopes, but please do not disturb them.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

CAMPING

Camping is permitted ONLY at those sites indicated on the map. Caravan, bus, and generator sites are available at Dales. Facilities include bush toilets, gas barbecues and picnic tables.

RUBBISH: Please help us by taking your rubbish with you.

IMPORTANT: Generators must be turned off overnight between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am. Please make sure your activities do not spoil the enjoyment of others.

WATER

Fresh water is available from tanks located at those sites indicated on the map. Carry plenty of water at all times.

LOOKOUTS

Lookout structures have been installed at a number of sites. Please stay behind the barriers. **Never throw rocks into the gorges, as people may be walking below.**

WALKING

Choose an appropriate trail presented in the guide overleaf to help you to explore the gorges.

- Stay on established trails and stand well back from cliff edges. Cliffs are about 100 metres high, often with loose rocks near the edge.
- If hiking overnight, let a responsible person know.
- Take care in the gorges. Rocks are smooth and slippery, particularly when wet. **WARNING!** Flash floods can occur. Do not enter the gorges if there is rain in the area. If you are already in the gorges, leave as quickly as you can.

BE PREPARED: Wear sturdy walking shoes, and take plenty of water.

SWIMMING

In most gorges you will find permanent pools of clear, fresh water. Some are deep, shaded and very cold, while others, exposed to the sun, may be pleasant places for a quick dip.

- Take care, as the water is extremely cold, especially between April and September, and hypothermia can occur.
- Check depths before jumping or diving into a pool.



WALKTRAIL GUIDE

MOUNT BRUCE (Punurrunha)

The second-tallest peak in WA lies about 36 kilometres west of the Park office. A great opportunity to view the Marandoo Mine site.

DALES GORGE

Tranquil sunken gardens, deep sedge-fringed pools, and permanently cascading waterfalls.

JOFFRE, KNOX AND RED GORGES

Appreciate the power of water shaping the landscape. Impressive waterfalls, deep, cold pools. See for yourself how the gorges were formed.

HANCOCK AND WEANO GORGES

Spectacular views, precipitous cliffs and narrow passages. Banded iron rock formations tower over the valleys far below.

KALAMINA GORGE

A great introduction to the gorge system. A delightful trail and picnicking area.

HAMERSLEY GORGE

Quite different again. Dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

TRAIL GRADES



WALKS

are short, easy, well-formed and suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. Some improvements have been made to the terrain.

Marandoo View 500 m – 30 min return

Follow the path to view the Marandoo Mine site. Excavation of ore for overseas markets began in July 1994.

Gorge Rim 1 km – 1 hr return

Follow the rim of the gorge between Circular Pool Lookout and Dales Gorge carpark. Wonderful views.

Joffre Lookout 100 m – 10 min return

Rock steps take you down to the lookout to view this spectacular curved waterfall forming a natural amphitheatre, which is especially impressive after rain.

Oxer and Junction Pool Lookouts 800 m – 30 min return

From the Weano carpark, follow the trail to the lookouts for breathtaking views into the gorges, 100 metres below you. Truly awe-inspiring!



TRACKS

are suitable for people with a moderate level of fitness, as there are some short uneven stretches of ground that may be loose or slippery underfoot.

Honey Hakea Track 4.6 km – 3 hr return

From the carpark at the base of Mount Bruce, take the path to Marandoo View. From here, follow the track to another vantage point further up the mountain. See the vegetation patterns of the mulga on the flats surrounding Mount Bruce.

Callitris Track 1 km – 1 hr return

Proceed from Dales Gorge car park around the gorge rim to Fortescue Falls car park above shady groves of native cypress sheltering on the cliff face below.

Knox Lookout 300 m – 15 min return

As you take this rough track down to the platform, watch the view spread out in the distance. Spectacular in the early morning or late afternoon light.

Handrail Pool 969 m – 1 hour 20 min return

From the Weano carpark, follow the trail to the edge of the gorge, then down the steps to the bottom. Here, high walls of rock will tower above you.

Please note: As the gorge narrows, the trail changes to a Route Level 1. Take care as you negotiate the slippery rocks on your climb down into the chilly waters of Handrail Pool.

Kalamina Gorge 3 km – 3 hr return

Walk out to the rock platform overlooking the pools and waterfall. Descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream, or stroll quietly beside the stream, covered with lemon-scented grass; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool.

Hamersley Waterfall 400 m – 30 min return

This track begins as steps, allowing access for most visitors. Ever-changing light and astonishing colours and reflections highlight the complex geological forces in this spectacular landscape.



ROUTES (LEVEL 1)

are for experienced, fit walkers. Trails may be unmarked and go over steep, slippery and unstable surfaces. Few, if any, improvements have been made.

Mount Bruce Summit 9 km – 6 hr return

Use the early morning hours to take the route that leads up the western face of the mountain, past Marandoo View. This challenging walk will reward you with spectacular views of the landscape.

Circular Pool 800 m – 2 hr return

After a steep descent, ramble along the gorge floor to the fern-framed pool. Take a dip before retracing your steps.

Knox Gorge 2 km – 3 hr return

As you climb down and scramble along the gorge, notice the fig trees clinging to the richly coloured walls. Skirt several pools and return from the 'Gorge Risk Area' sign.

Handrail Pool

Access includes two grades of trail—a track and a Route Level 1. (See description under TRACKS - Handrail Pool)

Hamersley Gorge 1 km – 3 hr return

Follow this route past still pools and polished boulders to 'The Grotto'—a fern-lined chasm, partly hidden in the side of the gorge.



ROUTES (LEVEL 2)

are for very experienced, well-equipped fit bushwalkers. These trails extend into Weano, Hancock, Red, Joffe and Knox Gorge. Details must be obtained from the ranger before starting.

Dales Gorge 1.5 km – 3 hr return

Experience gorge wildlife at close quarters from this creed-side trail between Fortescue Falls and Circular Pool Trail.

Joffre Falls 3 km – 3 hr return

Follow the marked route into the bottom of the gorge to the first pool downstream of the waterfall

Hancock Gorge 1.5 km – 3 hr return

Journey to the 'Centre of the Earth' down this steep, narrow gorge. Feel the highly polished rocks on the way down to 'Kermit's Pool'.

KARIJINI NATIONAL PARK

KEY TO SYMBOLS

- NATIONAL PARK
- SEALED ROAD
- UNSEALED ROAD
- MINOR ROAD
- CAMPING
- CARAVAN CAMPING
- FRESH WATER
- GAS BBQ'S
- INFORMATION
- LOOKOUT
- PARKING
- PARK OFFICE
- PICNIC FACILITIES
- SHADED PICNIC FACILITY
- RUBBISH TRAILER
- SWIMMING
- TELEPHONE
- TOILETS
- WALKTRAIL
- ASBESTOS WARNING

