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Conservation and Attractions

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Caring for the park and your safety

Plan ahead and prepare – your safety is our concern but your responsibility. Always carry ample drinking water.



Travel and camp on durable surfaces – There is no camping in the park. Camping is available at the nearby Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Park. Follow signs in the park and stay on marked trails.

Dispose of waste properly – please take your rubbish out of the park when you leave.

Leave what you find – such as rocks, plants and other natural objects.

Minimise campfire impacts – Fires are not permitted in the park. Use your portable gas stove. Dead wood is habitat for wildlife.

Respect wildlife – do not disturb animals and plants. No firearms or pets are permitted in the park.

Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors – Petroglyph sites in the park are culturally significant to the Wajarri people. Please enjoy the privilege of visiting these sites and treat them with respect.

Below Hikers admiring the view from the Summit Trail. Photo – Sue Hancock/
Parks and Wildlife



Visitor information

Access

Mount Augustus is 465km from Carnarvon via Gascoyne Junction and 345km from Meekatharra. Roads are gravel but suitable for two-wheel-drive vehicles. Roads may be closed or substantially damaged after rainfall. Seek advice from the local shires.

Carry ample fuel, water and supplies to cope with all possible occurrences.

Always stay on signposted tracks and stay with your vehicle if you break down.

Overnight

Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Park provides accommodation, powered caravan sites, camping facilities, food items (no prepared meals), barbecue area and fuel.

Ph: (08) 9943 0527 or email mtaugustoustouristpark@skymesh.com.au.

Note: this business is operated privately and not by Parks and Wildlife.

More information

Parks and Wildlife national park volunteers are usually based at the Mount Augustus Tourist Park from May to September.

Department of Parks and Wildlife (Carnarvon Office)

Phone: (08) 9941 3754

Shire of Upper Gascoyne Ph: (08) 9943 0988

Shire of Meekatharra Ph: (08) 9981 1002

In an emergency, dial 000



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



Front cover Mount Augustus National Park. Photo – Janine Guenther
Information current as at June 2016.
This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

Mount Augustus National Park

Burringurrah



Visitor guide

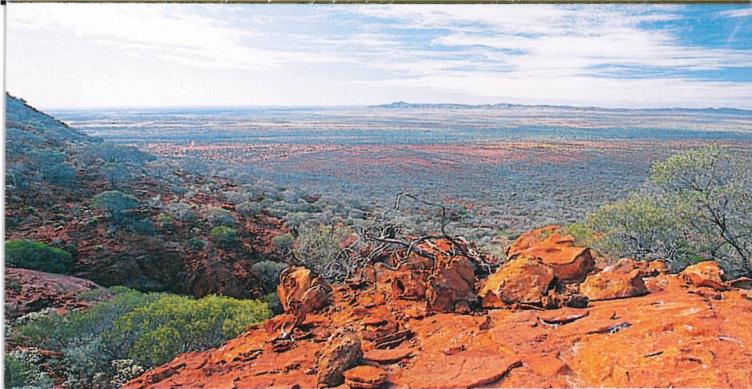
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Above View from Goordgeela Lookout. Photo - Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife

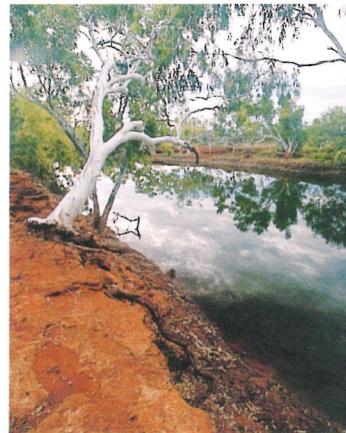
Mount Augustus National Park

Mount Augustus is an 'inselberg', meaning 'island mountain', which rises 715m out of the surrounding alluvial plain. Arid shrubland dominated by wattles, cassias and eremophilas cover the inselberg and the surrounding plain.

Take the 49km drive around Mount Augustus to access rocky creeks, gorges and open plains, view Aboriginal rock engravings (petroglyphs) and encounter a variety of wildlife.

Groves of white-barked river gums indicate water seepage - so precious to the local ecology. Mulga, gidgee and other wattles are dispersed across the plain. Likewise for spinifex pigeons, crimson chats, mulga parrots, babblers, emus and bustards (or wild turkey) - often found foraging for food resources. Bungarras (goannas) and red kangaroos are common on the plain, while euros and birds of prey are found closer to the inselberg.

At Cattle Pool on the Lyons River, a tributary of the Gascoyne, permanent pools attract waterbirds such as black cormorants, ibis, heron, and a variety of ducks. In the trees are blue-winged kookaburras, sacred kingfishers and corellas.



Right Cattle Pool. Photo - Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife Far right View of the north-east face of Mount Augustus from Emu Hill Lookout. Photo - Sue Hancock/Parks and Wildlife

Aboriginal history

Mount Augustus and surrounds are the traditional lands of the Wajarri people. Burringurrah is the Wajarri name for Mount Augustus.

In times of plenty, the Wajarri people would roam over a wide area of the Gascoyne. In times of drought, they would return to areas where water was available, such as the natural springs along the base of Mount Augustus. Aboriginal occupation is evident by engravings on rock walls at Mundee, Ooramboo and Beedoboondoo visitor sites, and by numerous stone tools discovered in these areas. Burringurrah continues to be a significant site to the Wajarri people.



Above Mount Augustus foxglove and jewel beetle. Above right Wedge-tailed eagle. Photos - Janine Guenther



Burringurrah was undergoing his initiation into manhood. The rigours of this process so distressed him that he ran away, thereby breaking Aboriginal law. Tribesmen pursued the boy, finally catching up with him and spearing him in the upper right leg as his punishment. Burringurrah fell to the ground; the spearhead broke from its shaft and protruded from his leg. The boy tried to crawl away but was hit with a mulgurrah (fighting stick).

Burringurrah collapsed and died, lying on his belly with his left leg bent up beside his body. You can see his final resting pose when you approach Mount Augustus from the south. The geological fracture lines at the western end of the inselberg indicate the wounds inflicted by the mulgurrah. Look for the spear stump in his leg that today is called Edney's Lookout.



Above View from Goordgeela Lookout. Photo - Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife

Geology

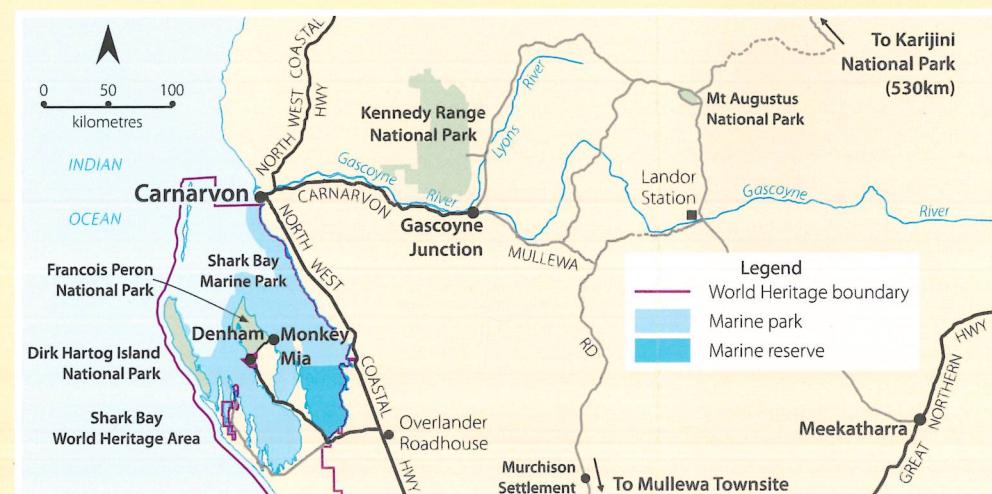
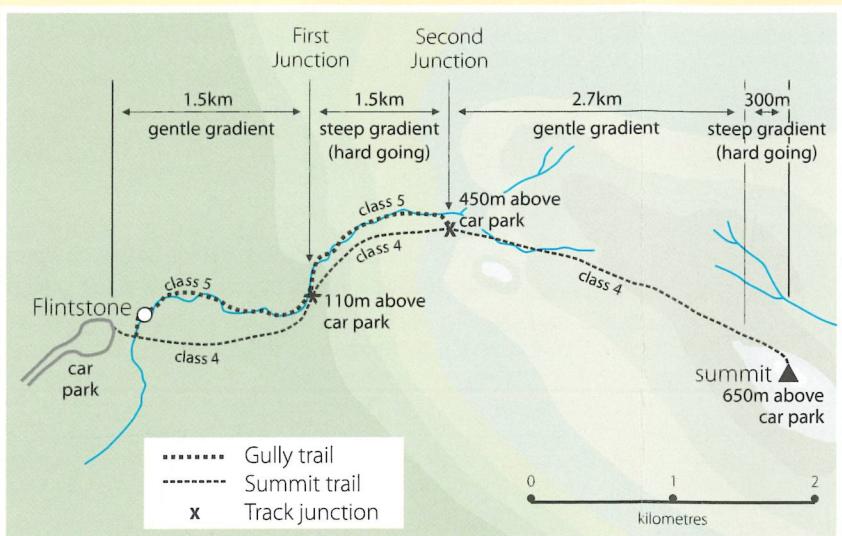
Mount Augustus is an asymmetrical anticline (rock layers that have been folded into an arch-like structure), which is steeper on its north-eastern side than the south-west.

The rocks consist of sand and gravel deposited by an ancient, south-easterly flowing river system that drained the region about 1600 million years ago. This river system flowed over a faulted and eroded surface of 1800–1620 million-year-old granitic and metamorphic rocks. The river deposits consolidated to form sandstone and conglomerate, and were then buried beneath younger marine sediments, which were laid down when shallow seas covered the region between 1600–1070 million years ago.

The rocks were buckled into their present-day structure about 900 million years ago when movement along faults in the underlying granitic and metamorphic rocks caused localised, strong, north-east directed compression. The marine sedimentary rocks that overlay the sandstone and conglomerate have since been eroded from Mount Augustus, but now form the hills around Cobra and Mount Augustus homesteads. Erosion has also removed sandstone and conglomerate from the north-western end of Mount Augustus to expose the underlying granitic rocks at The Pound.



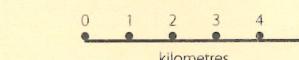
Enlargement of summit trail with shaded areas showing variation in contours in greater detail



Advice to walkers - Take care on escarpment slopes and cliff edges as the rock surface can be crumbly and unstable. Heat stroke can kill. Summer temperatures are extremely hot. To avoid dehydration, carry and drink 3-4 litres of water per person per day. Walk in the cooler times of the day. There is no drinking water in the national park.



Mount Augustus National Park Burringurrah



Legend



Walking in Mount Augustus National Park

From the climb to the summit to short walks visiting Aboriginal sites, there are a wide variety of trails to choose from. All trails in the park are essentially unmodified with only basic marking. Walkers should read the accompanying information on each trail, and take particular note of the difficulty rating.

These walk trails have been graded in difficulty according to *Australian Standards for Walking Tracks*. The following three classes apply to the walks described here.

Class 3 Users require a moderate level of fitness. Trails may be slightly modified, and can include unstable surfaces.

Class 4 Trails are in relatively undisturbed environments and are often rough with few, if any, modifications. A moderate to high level of fitness is required. Users should be prepared and self-reliant. Weather can affect safety.

Class 5 Mostly indistinct trails through undisturbed natural environments. Terrain is rough. A high level of fitness is required. Users must be prepared and self-reliant. Weather can affect safety.

CAUTION – Wear sturdy footwear and protective clothing. There is no drinking water in the park. Do not expect to find water in natural watercourses, even in winter, so always carry enough for your own needs. Heat stroke can kill and summer temperatures are extremely hot. Carry and drink 3–4 litres per person per day. Be aware that if a natural water source is available, it will need treatment to make it safe to drink. Treatment can be boiling for at least one minute, mechanical filtration or chemical treatment.

Visitor sites and trails

Loop Drive

A 49km circuit provides views of the changing faces of the rock and access to all feature sites. This road is suitable for conventional two-wheel-drive vehicles.

Emu Hill Lookout

Turn north about 6km north-west of the park boundary on the Cobra-Mount Augustus Road, and drive 1.5km along a track suitable for two-wheel-drive vehicles. The lookout is a good location to take photographs of the inselberg; at sunset it is usually most colourful.

Right Mount Augustus marks the southern most habitat of the Pilbara olive python (*Liasis olivaceus barroni*). The snake can grow to 6.5m and is most often seen close to water. While it is not considered a threat to people, it will defend itself if provoked. Walkers encountering it should maintain a safe distance. Photo – Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife



Left Summit Trail. Photo – Albert and Patricia Chandler

Goolinee–Cattle Pool

A permanent pool on the Lyons River. This site is particularly picturesque after rains have filled the pool to capacity.

Corella Trail (Class 3) 1.2km return, 30 minutes–1 hour 15 minutes

This easy trail begins mid-way along the south bank of Cattle Pool. Quiet and observant walkers are rewarded with tranquil scenes of waterbirds. Corellas and other species forage in the river gums.

Goordgeela

Goordgeela Lookout Trail (Class 4) 3km return, 1–3 hours

This trail follows a rocky creek for part of the way, becoming steeper as walkers approach the lookout. From the lookout there are views of the Lyons River meandering through the plain and the Godfrey Range to the north.

The Pound

Earlier last century, this natural basin was used for holding cattle before moving them on hoof to Meekatharra. Drowsing to Meekatharra would take 10–12 days.

Saddle Trail (Class 3) 1km return, 20 minutes–1 hour

The saddle area has views back into The Pound and over the Lyons River valley to the north.

Flintstone–Beedoboondu

Flintstone Rock (Class 3) 500m return, 15–30 minutes

Following the first section of the Gully Trail, this short walk will bring you to Flintstone Rock. This large slab of rock bridges the rocky stream. Walkers can crawl under Flintstone Rock to observe engravings by Aboriginal people.

Summit Trail (Class 4) 12km return, 5–8 hours

This trail is the easier and more popular route to the summit. It is still a difficult walk, so it should only be undertaken by prepared and experienced bushwalkers. The climb to the top of the inselberg provides extensive views over the surrounding plain and drainage basin to distant ranges. An early start is recommended, and please advise someone of your plans. Seek advice at the Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Park. See inset map for a more detailed route description.

Gully Trail (Class 5) 12km return, 5–9 hours

This more challenging trail links into the Summit Trail after 1.5km and again after 3km. This gives several alternate route options in the first half of the summit trail. The first junction of the Summit and Gully trails allows for a shorter loop walk. From Flintstone Rock, continue up the Gully Trail for 1.5km, then at the first junction, walk back down to the car park via the Summit Trail.

Mundee

Petroglyph Trail (Class 3) 300m return, 10–20 minutes

This easy walk to an engraved wall is a place to quietly ponder the Wajarri culture.

Edneys–Ooramboo

Ooramboo Trail (Class 3) 500m return, 15–30 minutes

An easy walk to view Aboriginal engravings along an escarpment. An extra walk of 100m will bring you to Edney Spring.

Edney's Trail (Class 4) 6km return, 2–5 hours

This well-defined trail will lead you to Edney's Lookout (a peak that is visible from the tourist park). The trail is suitable for people seeking elevated views but who don't want to tackle the more strenuous Summit Trail.

Gum Grove–Warrarla

Gum Grove Trail (Class 3) 1km return, 20 minutes–1 hour

This easy trail takes walkers through a shady grove of river red gums. The return point for this trail is at the Kotka Gorge sign.

Kotka Gorge Trail (Class 4) 4km return, 1.5–3 hours

This trail incorporates the Gum Grove Trail. Walkers then continue along a dry, rocky creek bed before moving above the creek line until just before the main opening of Kotka Gorge. This marks the end of the trail. There are views to the east of Mount Augustus from this point.