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Caring for the park and your safety

Be careful Your enjoyment and safety are our concern but your responsibility.

Be cool Always carry ample drinking water.

Be clean Please take your rubbish out of the park when you leave.

Be responsible Don't light fires. Use your portable gas stove. Dead wood is habitat for wildlife.

Be kind Do not disturb animals and plants. No firearms or pets are permitted in the park.

Stay on track Follow signs in the park and stay on marked trails.

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 340km from Meekatharra. Roads are gravel but suitable for two-wheel-drive vehicles. Roads may be closed or substantially damaged after heavy seasonal 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. Phone (08) 9943 0527 or email mtaugustustouristpark@skymesh.com.au.

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

More information

Department of Parks and Wildlife campground hosts are usually based at Mount Augustus from April to September.

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Carnarvon Office

59 Olivia Terrace, Carnarvon, WA 6701

Phone: (08) 9941 3754

Fax: (08) 9941 1801

Shire of Upper Gascoyne

4 Scott Street, Gascoyne Junction, WA 6705

Phone: (08) 9943 0988

Shire of Meekatharra

Phone: (08) 9981 1002

Front cover Mount Augustus National Park. *Photo – Janine Gunther*
Information current at April 2015.

This publication is available in alternative formats on request.



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Mount Augustus National Park Burringurrah



Visitor guide



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

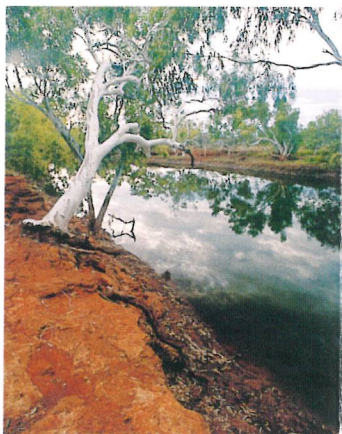
Mount Augustus National Park

Mount Augustus is an 'inselberg', meaning 'island mountain', which rises abruptly 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 the sandstone inselberg. Access rocky creeks and gorges, open plains, view Aboriginal rock engravings (petroglyphs) and encounter a variety of wildlife.

Drainage lines from the rocks seep beneath the surrounding soils to feed groves of white-barked river gums. Elsewhere mulga, gidgee and other wattles are dispersed across the plain. Here spinifex pigeons, crimson chats, mulga parrots and babbler forage for food. Nearby, emus seek fruits, and bustards snatch insects and small reptiles from the ground. Bungarras (goannas) and red kangaroos are common on the plain, while euros and birds of prey are found closer to the rock.

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



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 is 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, Oorambo and Beedoboondy visitor sites, and by numerous stone tools discovered in these areas. Burringurrah continues to be a very significant site to the Wajarri people, many of whom live at the nearby Burringurrah community.



Above Mount Augustus foxglove and jewel beetle.

Above right Wedge-tailed eagle. Photos – Janine Gunther

In the Dreaming, a boy called 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.



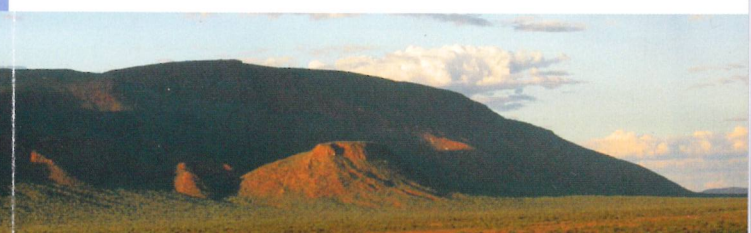
Above View from Goordgeela Lookout. Photo – Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife

Geology

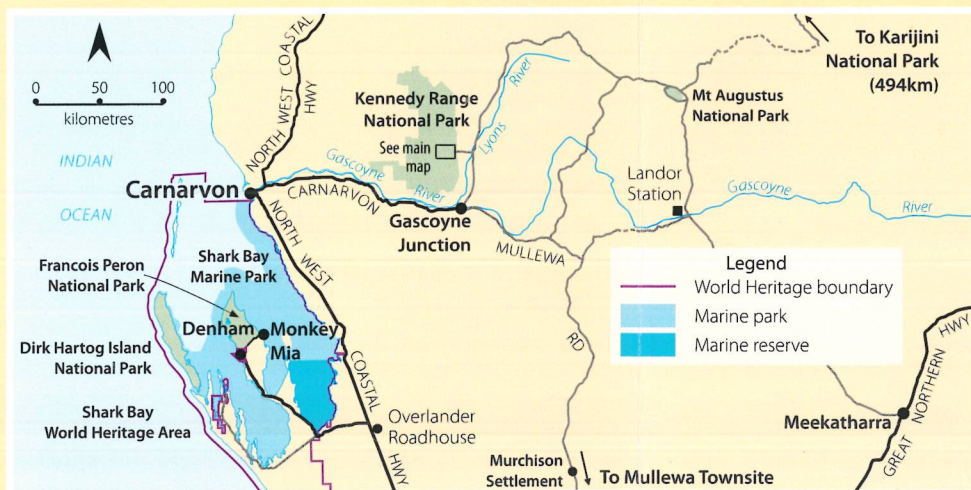
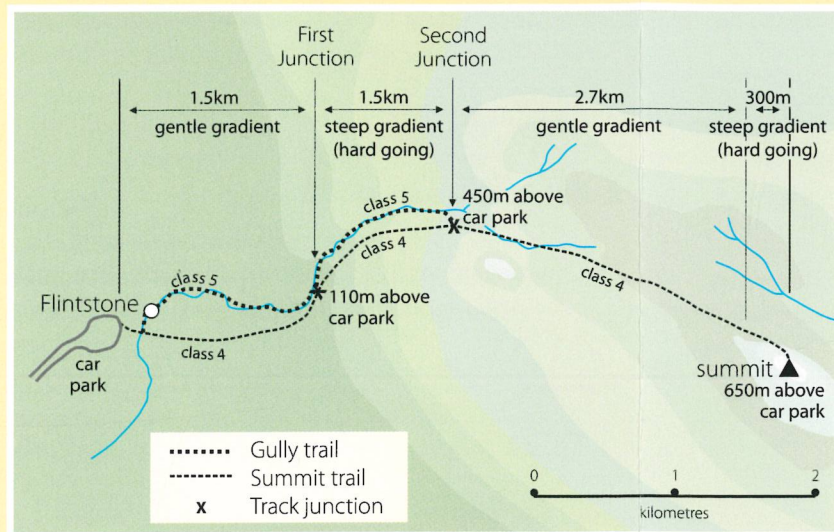
Mount Augustus is an asymmetrical anticline (rock layers that have been folded into an arch-like structure), which is steeper on its north-eastern side than the south-west.

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.

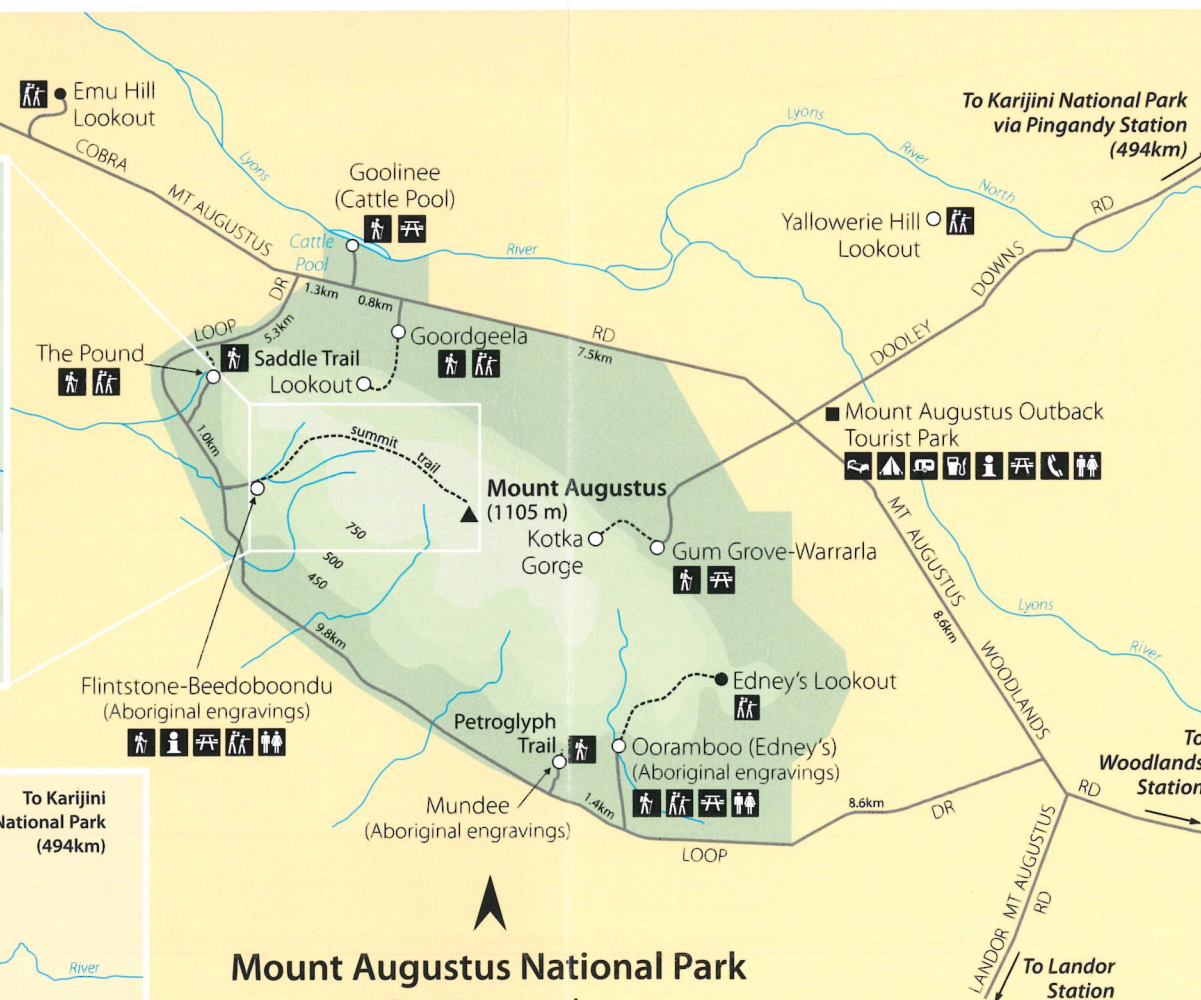
The rocks were buckled into their present-day structure about 900 million years ago when movement along faults in the underlying granitic and metamorphic rocks caused localised, strong, north-east directed compression. The marine sedimentary rocks that overlay the sandstone and conglomerate have since 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. To avoid dehydration, drink three to four litres of water per day when walking. There is no drinking water in the national park. Bottled water is available at Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Park.



Mount Augustus National Park Burringurrah



Walking in Mount Augustus National Park

From the climb to the summit and short walks to 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 self-reliant, because there are few encounters with others. 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. The availability of water in parks, especially for drinking, cannot be guaranteed. Do not expect to find water supplied or in natural watercourses, even in winter, so always carry enough for your own needs. Carry and drink 3–4L per person per day.

Treat any available water to make it safe for consumption unless it is indicated that it is safe to drink. Water in water tanks is not suitable for drinking, food preparation or human consumption without treatment. Treatment can be vigorous boiling for at least one minute, mechanical filtration or chemical treatment.

CARING FOR CULTURE – Petroglyph sites in the park are culturally significant to the Wajarri people. Please enjoy the privilege of visiting these sites, but treat them with respect.

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 off north about 6km 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. A day-use area only. Particularly picturesque after rains have filled the pool to capacity.



Coreella Trail (Class 3) 1.2km return, 30 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes

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

Goordgeela



Goordgeela Lookout Trail (Class 4) 3km return, 1.5 to 2 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 this century, this natural basin was used for holding cattle before moving them on hoof to Meekatharra. Droving to Meekatharra would take 10 to 12 days.



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

Walking towards the saddle provides views back into The Pound and over the Lyons River valley to the north.

Flintstone – Beedoboondou



Flintstone Rock (Class 3) 500m return, 15 to 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 course. Walkers can crawl under Flintstone Rock to observe engravings by Aboriginal people.



Summit Trail (Class 4) 12km return, 5 to 8 hours (average 6 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 to 9 hours (average 7 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 between 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 to 20 minutes

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

Edneys – Oorambo



Oorambo Trail (Class 3) 500m return, 15 to 30 minutes

A relatively 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 to 5 hours

This well-defined trail will lead you to Edney's Lookout (a peak that is clearly seen 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 to 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) 2km return, 45 minutes to 2 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. Kotka Gorge is a rock fall risk area and is not part of the trail.