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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 rain. Seek advice from the local shires.

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

Overnight

Mount Augustus Outback Tourist Park provides accommodation, powered caravan sites, camping facilities, food items (no prepared meals), a licence, a barbecue area and fuel. Phone (08) 9943 0527 or email mtaugustustouristpark@skymesh.com.au.

Cobra Bangemall Inn provides accommodation, food items (no prepared meals), and a barbecue area. Phone (08) 9943 0565.

Note: these businesses are operated privately and not by Parks and Wildlife.

More information

Department of Parks and Wildlife volunteers 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

Information current at June 2014.

Front cover Mount Augustus National Park. Photo – Tourism WA
This publication is available in alternative formats on request.



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



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Mount Augustus National Park (Burringurrah)



Visitor guide

PAM03901



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

Mount Augustus National Park

Mount Augustus (Burringurrah) rises abruptly 715m out of an extensive, stony, red sandplain of arid shrubland dominated by wattles, cassias and eremophilas. The mount is 1105m above sea level.

Around the sandstone and quartz massif, the 49km Loop Road provides access to rocky creek gorges, Aboriginal rock engravings (petroglyphs) and a variety of wildlife on the rocks, plains and water courses.

Drainage lines from the rocks seep beneath the surrounding sands to feed groves of white-barked river gums. Elsewhere mulga, gidgee and other wattles are dispersed across the red sandplain. 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.

Far right View of the north-east face of Mount Augustus from Emu Hill Lookout.

Photo – Sue Hancock/Parks and Wildlife

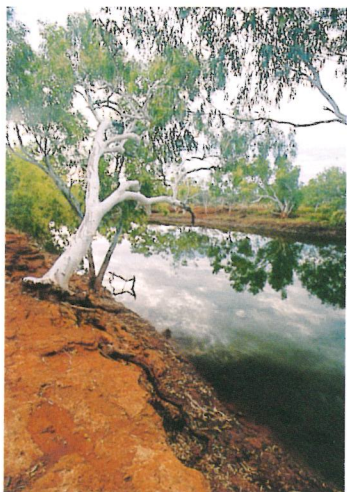
Centre left Mount Augustus foxglove and jewel beetle.

Photo – Janine Gunther

Centre right Wedge-tailed eagle.

Photo – Janine Gunther

Right Cattle Pool. Photo – Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife



Aboriginal history

The area around Mount Augustus 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, however, 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 the 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.



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 mount indicate the wounds inflicted by the mulgurrah. Look for the spear stump in his leg that today is called Edney's Lookout.



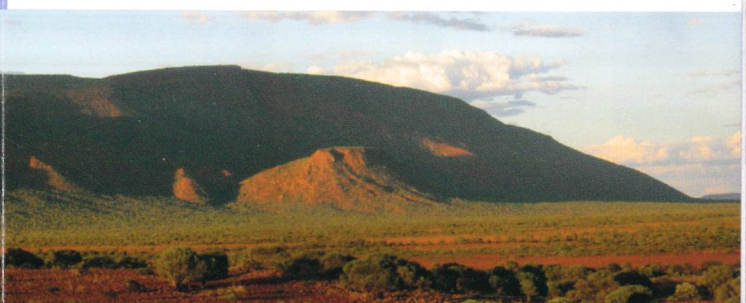
Above View from Goordgeela Lookout. Photo – Scott Godley/Parks and Wildlife

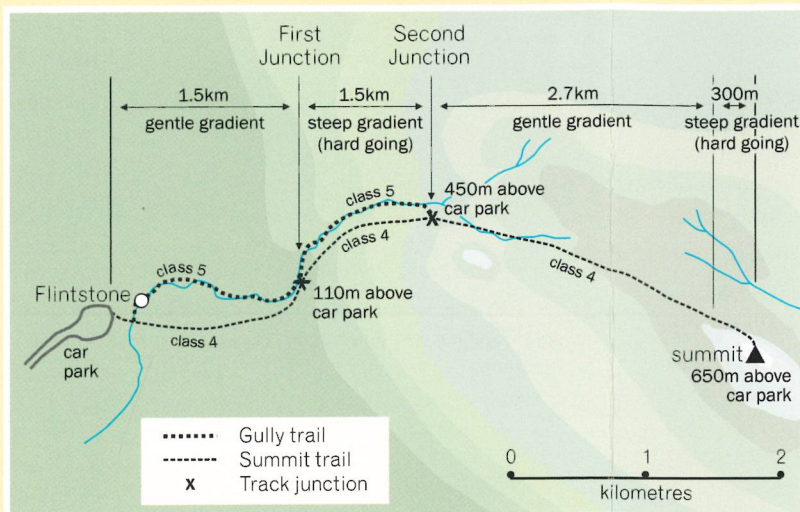
Geology

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.

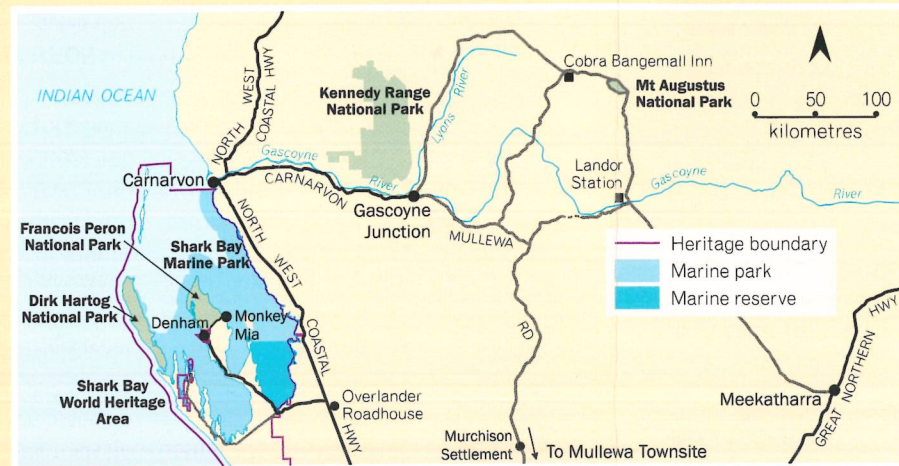
The rocks consist of sand and gravel deposited by an ancient, south-easterly flowing river system that drained the region about 1600 million years ago. This river system flowed over a faulted and eroded surface of 1800–1620 million-year-old granitic and metamorphic rocks. The river deposits consolidated 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 or at Cobra Bangemall Inn.



Mount Augustus National Park (Burringurrah)



Legend

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| National park | Fuel station |
| Sealed road | Hiking trail |
| Unsealed road | Information |
| Walk trail | Picnic tables |
| Accommodation | Scenic vistas |
| Camping | Telephone |
| Caravan park | Toilets |

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. To avoid dehydration drink three to four litres of water per day when walking. There is no drinking water in the national park.

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 Road

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

Emu Hill Lookout

Turn off north about 5km west of the park boundary on the Cobra Station 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 mount; at sunset it is usually most colourful.

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.

Corella Trail (Class 3) 1.2km return, 45 minutes

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

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

Below Cattle Pool.

Photo – Rory Chapple/Parks and Wildlife



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 sandplain 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

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

Flintstone – Beedoboondy

Flintstone Rock (Class 3) 500m return, 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.

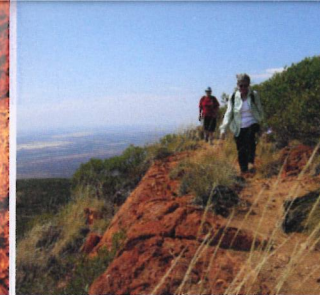
Summit Trail (Class 4) 12km return, 5 to 8 hours (average 6 hours)

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 mount 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.



Left Summit Trail.

Photo – Albert and Patricia Chandler



Gully Trail (Class 5) 12km return, 4 to 9 hours (average 7 hours)

This more challenging trail links into the Summit Trail after 1.5km and again after 3km, providing a number of alternate route options to and from the summit. Walkers using the Gully Trail option in either direction should add at least an extra hour to the standard six-hour summit walking time. For more information refer to the inset map.

The first junction between the Summit and Gully trails provides an opportunity for a shorter loop walk. Walkers continue up the Gully Trail from Flintstone Rock for 1.5km, at the first junction cut across to the Summit Trail and return down to the car park.

Mundee

Petroglyph Trail (Class 3) 200m return, 20 minutes

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

Edneys – Oorambo

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

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, 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 reaching the main opening of Kotka Gorge. This marks the end of the trail and provides views to the east of Mount Augustus.