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Caring for the park

Every year more than two million visitors make their way to visit the Kimberley's protected areas. A few simple measures can help conserve the environment and keep it beautiful for years to come.



Plan ahead and prepare. Your enjoyment and safety are our concern but your responsibility.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Stay on the roads and tracks to protect the park.

Dispose of waste properly. Please take your rubbish with you and dispose of appropriately in the next town. No bins are provided in the park. Do not contaminate water with soaps or sunscreen as they can affect aquatic life.

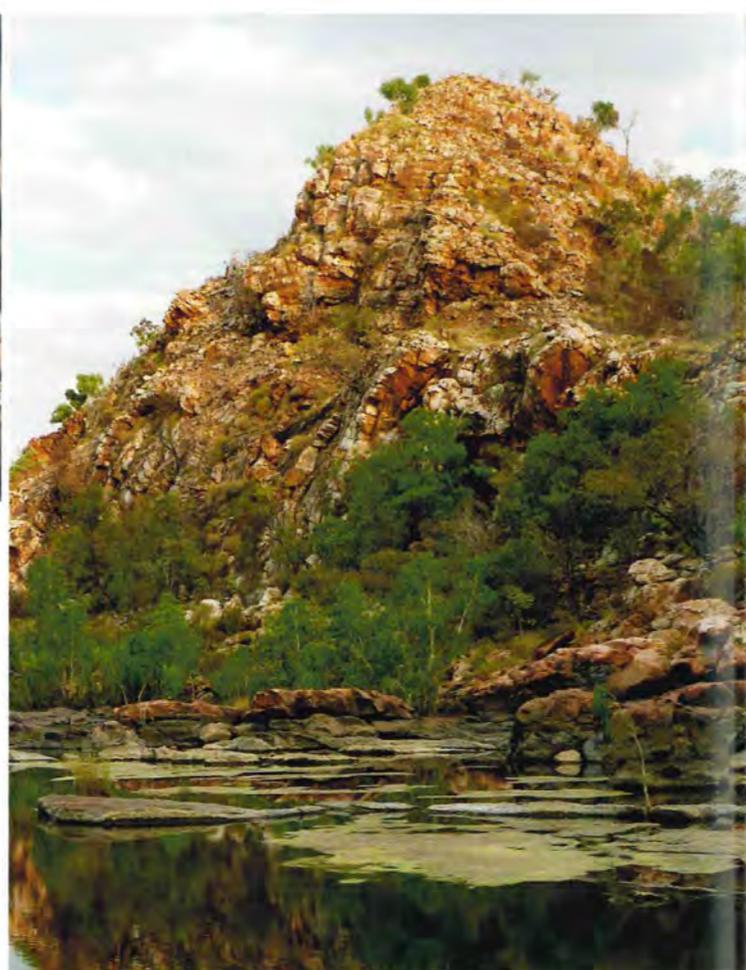
Leave what you find. Leave things as you find them for all to enjoy.

Minimise campfire impacts. Avoid the risk of bushfire. Use the gas barbecues provided, or your own portable cooking appliance. Fires are only permitted in the fire rings at Bandilngan Windjana Gorge Campground.

Respect wildlife. Do not disturb or take any animals, plants or rocks. Pets, firearms and fishing are not permitted.

Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors. Respect your neighbours; Silent Grove is a family-friendly campground.

CAUTION Pets and firearms are not permitted in the conservation park and fishing is prohibited in the gorge.



Above left Oriental pratincole Above King Leopold Ranges. Photo - Colin Ingram/DBCA

Take care

When you are entering the Kimberley, you are entering crocodile country.

Freshwater crocodiles live in the waterways in the King Leopold Ranges. Although not usually a danger to people, parents should exercise caution with small children. Swim at your own risk.

There are many risks in this park including cliff risk and falling rocks, please heed to all warnings.



More information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Parks and Wildlife Service
111 Herbert Street Broome WA
Ph: (08) 9195 5500
dbca.wa.gov.au

Derby Visitor Centre

Ph: (08) 9191 1423

Fitzroy Crossing Visitor Centre

Ph: (08) 9191 5355

Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

Ph: (08) 9191 0999

Main Roads Western Australia

Ph: 1800 013 314
(24-hour road condition report)

Mount Hart Wilderness Lodge

(For enquiries and bookings for accommodation)
(08) 9191 4645
mounthart.com.au

Fire and other emergency information

Visit emergency.wa.gov.au or listen to ABC Radio for bushfire alerts and warnings.
In the event of an emergency, call 000.

Front cover Bells Falls. Photo - Colin Ingram/DBCA

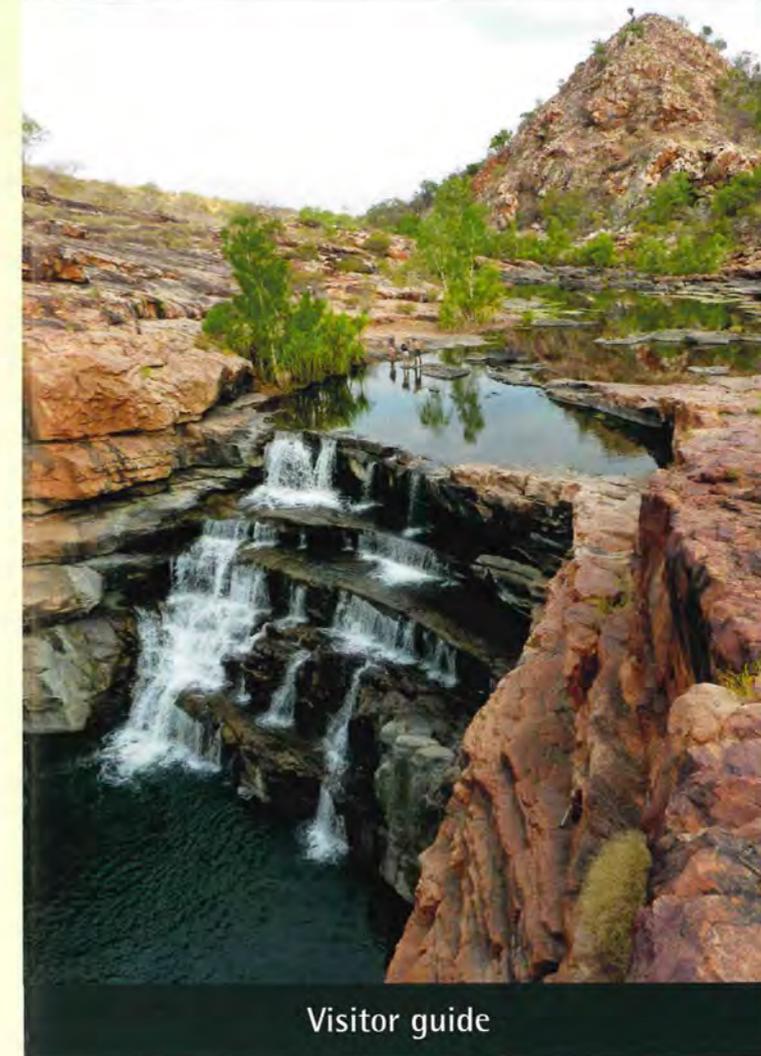


Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



Information current as of September 2018.
This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



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Above Sand goanna

A piece of history

King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park offers visitors the opportunity to explore and camp in a wilderness environment with stunning waterholes, dramatic escarpments and spectacular waterfalls, including in the impressive Bell and Dolerite gorges.

Situated on the south-western edge of the Kimberley Plateau, the park encompasses the 560-million-year-old King Leopold Ranges. The King Leopold Ranges consist of long, craggy ridges and impressive escarpments that include sedimentary formations of sandstone and granite rock strata.

Below Boab tree at Annie Creek Below right Stripe-faced dunnart



Traditional owners

The conservation park is located on Wilinggin country, which is home to the Ngarinyin People who have a long and strong spiritual connection to this country.

"Wandjina came from the wind and travelled the land and made this earth, and sea, and the mountains, the rivers, the waterholes, the trees, the plants, the animals, the language, and then the people. Wandjina made everything. Wandjina then gave us the Law to follow and gave us the land."

Elder David Mowaljarlai, 1992

Their culture is kept alive and strong by looking after this country and the important cultural and environmental values. The Wungurr Rangers, located at the Gibb River Station, help traditional owners manage their lands through natural and cultural resource management techniques. You may see them in the park carrying out monitoring, maintenance and cultural activities.

Planning your visit

The park is about 200km east of Derby and 450km west of Kununurra on the Gibb River Road. The only access is by unsealed roads and you will need a four-wheel drive. Road conditions can vary greatly, change rapidly and roads are often closed from November to April each year due to the wet season. The conservation park is generally open to the public from the end of April to late November depending on weather and road conditions. During this time of year it is the dry season, typified by clear warm days and cool nights. Temperatures range from about 35 degrees during the day to 15 degrees at night.

Below Silent Grove Campground. Photo - Colin Ingram/DBCA Below right Water lily



Silent Grove Campground and Bell Gorge are key recreation sites in the park. The privately operated Mount Hart Wilderness Lodge also offers accommodation and access to four day-use recreation sites: Barker Pool, Dolerite Gorge, Sunset Hill and Annie Creek.

Before setting off, visitors should contact Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitors centres, Shire of Derby, West Kimberley or DBCA's Parks and Wildlife Service Broome office to make sure the park and roads are open.

Fees and park passes

Visitor fees apply at Silent Grove Campground and Bell Gorge; these help to maintain and enhance King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park. Please pay your entry fee at the entrance station, by either paying a ranger, campground hosts or depositing the fee in the collection box if the area is unattended. A range of park passes are available at Parks and Wildlife Service offices, online at shop.dbca.wa.gov.au and Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitor centres.

Silent Grove Campground

Silent Grove Campground is the best area to set up camp and to see Bell Gorge and Bells Falls, which are about 11km north-west of this campground. This is a relaxed riverside campground with shower and toilet facilities but no powered sites. Rangers are onsite from mid-April to mid-October. The fire pits are to be used responsibly and firewood is to be brought in from outside the conservation park.

Generators are permitted from 7am to 8pm and there is also a quiet camping area. Campsites can be booked online at parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au or cash can be paid on entry. It is advised to book online in advance.

Recreation sites

Bell Gorge

Following wet season rains, great volumes of water cascade from the King Leopold Ranges. In the dry, the spectacular cascading waterfalls are a sight to see and a relaxing place to swim. Bell Gorge is 11km from Silent Grove Campground, at the head of the Silent Grove Valley. If this popular site is too busy for your liking, you can also explore upstream. Information shelter, tables, toilets and picnic areas are a 10-minute drive from the gorge. Walk trails provide opportunities to view the gorge.

The following recreation sites are accessible via the Mount Hart Homestead:

Annie Creek

A pleasant picnic spot with a short walk crossing the creek where you can view a boab tree entwined with a strangler fig.

Sunset Hill

This is the best place to head after a long day exploring. Catch the sunset over the King Leopold Ranges with 360-degree views.

Dolerite Gorge

The Barker River flows through the centre of Dolerite Gorge's steep granite cliffs past outcrops of dolerite. You can rock-hop your way to where the gorge narrows, past giant paperbark trees, exploring rapids and swimming holes along the way.

Barkers Pool

A delightful swimming and fishing spot where Barker River widens. At the base of a beautiful granite escarpment you can go for a swim, enjoy a picnic under the trees or go for a walk.

Lennard River Gorge

This gorge includes both Leopold sandstone and dolerite, and has a lookout where falls can be viewed.

Yellowman Gorge

After an adventurous 20km four wheel drive, enjoy the steep sandstone cliff faces and deep waterway.



Walk trails

Explore the dramatic and beautiful landscapes of King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park on one of four walk trails.

Silent Grove Creek Walk

Class 3, 200m return (approx. 30 minutes)

An uneven surfaced trail meanders beside Silent Grove Creek up to the pool that supplies the water to the camping area and ranger's station. Please help to keep it clean for all visitors by not swimming in the pool. Look for the very large white flowers of the dragon trees along the creek.



Bell Gorge Trail

Class 4, 1.5km return (approx. 1 hour)

The walk to Bell Creek and the top of the gorge will reward you with spectacular views of the gorge and waterfalls. From here you can see the creek spill 150m down into the gorge to form a waterfall that cascades over the layered sandstone rocks.



Lennard River Gorge Trail

Class 4, 3km return (approx. 2 hours)

The walk from the carpark takes you along a creek line and up on to the King Leopold sandstone before culminating in a lookout where the falls can be viewed.



Bell Falls Trail

Class 5, 2km return (approx. 2 hours)

Follow the trail markers to the creek crossing and descend to the pools below. The base of the falls is a superb spot for swimming. There is a deep pool sheltered by rocky walls and surrounded by ledges. However, getting to the pool is the most difficult part of the trail and is steep and rocky in places so be cautious. Water-washed rocks can be wet and slippery.



Safe walking tips

Plan ahead and choose your walks and activities to match your level of preparedness, experience and fitness. Daytime temperatures are extremely hot.



To protect yourself from heat stroke, take and drink 3-4L of water per day when walking. Walking during cooler times of the day is recommended.

Left (from top) Ta-ta lizard. Photo - Neale Junction. Purple-crowned fairy wren. Antilopine wallaroo and joey **Right** Bells Falls **Far right** Boab tree

Walk trail classifications

Parks and Wildlife Service walk trails are assigned a 'Class' to indicate degree of difficulty. The walk classes range from Class 1 (universal access), which is suitable for wheelchairs, to Class 5, which require walkers to be fit, experienced and suitably equipped. Check trailhead signs at the start of walks for specific information. The walk trails in this brochure range from Class 3 to Class 5.

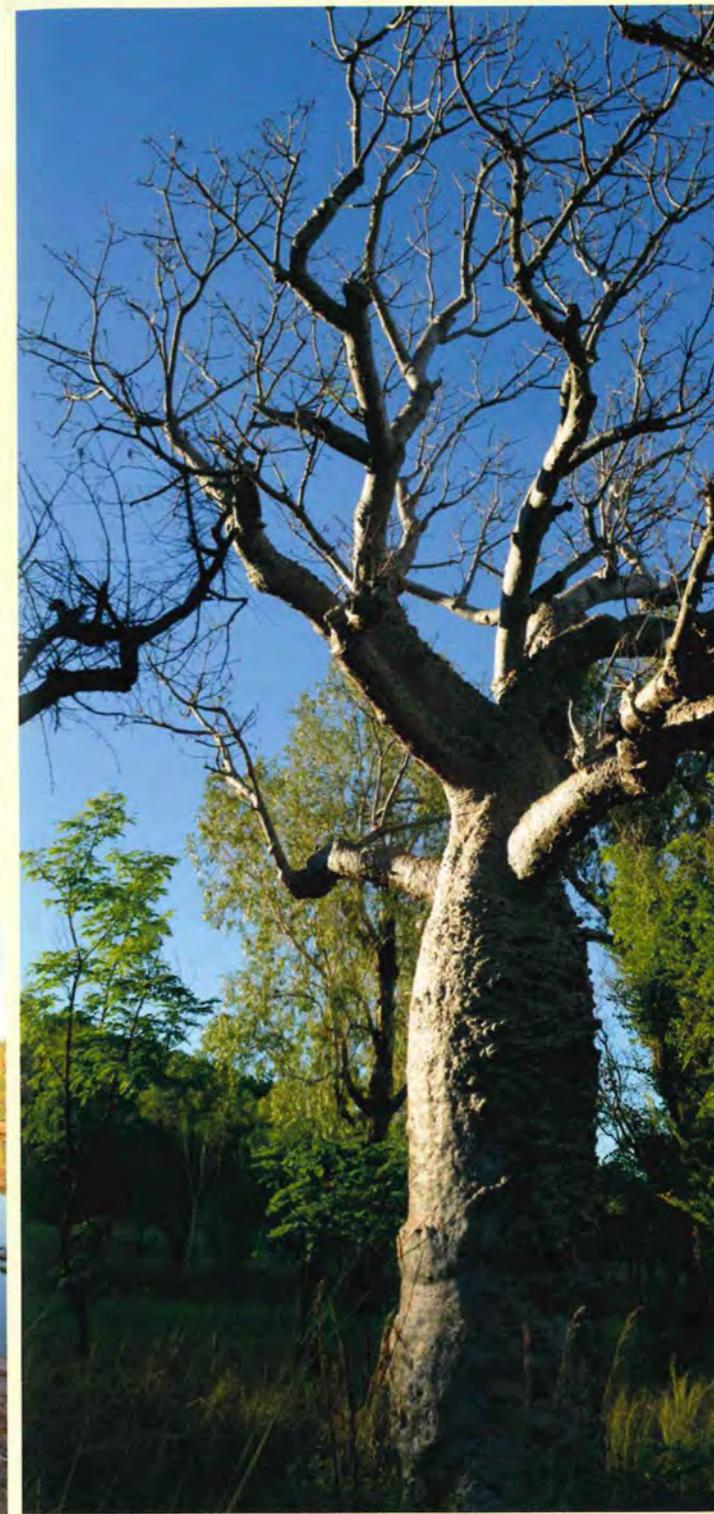
Class 3 Moderate walk trail with clear directional signage. You may encounter minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections; steps; shallow water crossings; and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness is recommended.



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. You need to be prepared and self-reliant.



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



Wildlife

Many mammals may be seen in this park, including the echidna, sugar gliders, northern quolls, the northern brown bandicoot, and the little-known rock ringtail possum. Unlike its tree-dwelling relatives, the rock ringtail possum lives exclusively in rocky outcrops sleeping during the day venturing forth at night to feed on blossoms and fruit.

Macropods found in the ranges include the antilopine wallaroo, the euro, short-eared rock wallabies, agile wallabies and northern nail-tail wallabies. Small nocturnal animals include the stripe-faced dunnart, the long-tailed planigale, Forrest's mouse and the delicate mouse. As well as the dusky leafnosed-bat and the common bent-wing bat, the little known yellow-lipped bat has been found in the wetter areas of the ranges.

Freshwater crocodiles and the abundant northern long-necked turtles live in the creeks within the park. Merten's water monitors are often seen swimming and basking in and around Bell Gorge. Ta-ta lizards, blue-tongue lizards, geckos and sand monitors are all part of this rich area.

The various species of snakes found in the region include Stimson's, water, olive and black-headed pythons. Snakes of the Elapidae family; that is front-fanged snakes, include the venomous mulga, western brown snakes and the black whip snake, reputed to be the fastest species of snake in Australia! Remember snakes are a vital part of the ecosystem and if you leave them alone they will leave you alone.

Numerous species of frogs can be seen and heard along watercourses at night. Campground toilets are a favourite haunt of the green tree frog. Rocket frogs inhabit the edges of the streams and the rock overhangs at Bell Gorge.

You may be lucky enough to see the threatened purple-crowned fairy wren along Bell Creek.

Silent Grove Campground and Bell Gorge have riverine plant systems that support a wide range of plants. Some of the most common trees include the boab, green plum, turkey bush, golden shower, woollybutt eucalypt, corkbark and quinine tree. You may also see the beautiful water lilies with attractive purple flowers that open in the sunlight and close in the evening.

