

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 It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

Karijini National Park



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Download this guide and take it with you.



Front cover Fortescue Falls. *Photo – Scott Godley.*
Above Fern Pool.

Welcome to Karijini National Park

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 Western Australia's second largest national park, encompassing more than 627,000 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 plateaux 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.

Traditional owners

The Banyjima, Yinhawangka and Kurrama Aboriginal people know the Hamersley Range as Karijini. The name of the park recognises the historic and continuing significance of the area to the people and their involvement in park management.

Evidence of their ancestors' occupation dates back more than 30,000 years. During that period, Aboriginal land management practices such as 'fire stick farming' resulted in a diversity of vegetation types and states of succession, and have helped determine the range of plants and animals found in the park today.

Fern Pool and Circular Pool are among many special places to Aboriginal people. To protect the heritage, cultural and environmental values of these areas, visitors are encouraged to enter the water quietly and avoid making loud noises. Access to the area above Fern Pool is not permitted. Please do not climb or jump from this waterfall or ledges surrounding Circular Pool. Relax and enjoy these unique areas.

Climate

The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. A highly variable, mainly summer rainfall of 250–350mm is often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones producing spectacular water flows in the gorges. During summer, temperatures frequently exceed 40°C; ideal conditions for swimming in the gorge pools. Winter days are warm and clear but nights are cold and sometimes frosty.



Above Knox Gorge.

Geology

The banded iron formations exposed in many of the rocks in and around the gorges originated more than 2500 million years ago as iron and silica-rich sediment deposits accumulated on an ancient sea floor. Over millions of years these 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 sculpted the rocks into the present landscape.

The gorges

In the north of the park, small creek beds, hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year, suddenly plunge down 100m chasms. Further downstream the gorges become wider and their sides change from sheer cliffs 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 hike 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 bloom. 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.

There are many birds in the park from a variety of species, especially in fringing vegetation along pools and streams. If you are observant, you may also encounter red kangaroos, euros (kangaroos that are common to the rocky country), Rothschild's rock wallabies, bats and wild dogs.

Many species of native rodents and marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara ningau are resident, but nocturnal and shy. Reptiles and amphibians such as frogs, geckoes, goannas, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes abound within the park. Visit the **Atlas of Living Australia** (ala.org.au) to find out more about the flora and fauna of the area.

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

Facilities

Karijini Visitor Centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre is located just off Banjima Drive (eastern section). It is open from 9am to 4pm from March to November with reduced hours over the remaining months. Seasonal closures may be in effect December–February.

Camping

Campsites are available at designated areas indicated on the map. Caravan, bus, and generator sites are available at Dales camping area and Karijini Eco Retreat. Facilities include toilets, and picnic tables. Generators are permitted in some sites. Please observe generator operation times.

Wild dogs can be seen at Karijini. They may scavenge for food and can become aggressive. Never feed any wildlife, supervise your children at all times, and store your food, rubbish and iceboxes in your vehicle or off the ground. Campground hosts are based at Dales Campground May–September to assist visitors.

Rubbish

There are no rubbish bins provided in the park. Please help by taking your rubbish with you. Visitors camping for lengthy periods may deposit rubbish into a trailer located 2km east of the visitor centre, next to the water tank.

Telephones

A public telephone is located at the visitor centre and also at the Karijini Eco Retreat. Mobile telephone reception is limited in Karijini National Park but is available at the following locations: Telstra – Karijini Visitor Centre, Karijini Eco Retreat, Mt Bruce and Hamersley Gorge, Optus – Karijini Visitor Centre, Karijini Eco Retreat and Dales Campground

Satellite phones are recommended for use in other areas, although reception may be unreliable in the gorges. There are emergency radios located at Weano picnic area and Fortescue Falls carpark.

Water

Water is available from the visitor centre and from a tank on Banjima Drive East near the Dales Gorge turn-off. Water is not treated and boiling or chemical treatment is recommended. Bottled water can be purchased from the visitor centre.

When hiking or undertaking other activities, carry plenty of water at all times when undertaking hikes and other activities.

Lookouts

Lookout platforms are provided at various locations indicated on the park map. Supervise children at all times and please stay behind the barriers. Never throw rocks into the gorges, as people may be hiking below.

Hiking

Hiking trails in Karijini National Park are classified according to Australian Standards. The guide overleaf contains information about the various trails to help you plan your trip. Please select those that suit your level of ability. Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.

Be prepared:

- Extreme heat can be experienced when hiking in Karijini, outside the gorges. Temperatures can regularly exceed 50°C from November to April. It is recommended hiking in the cooler months or first thing in the morning.
- Carry and drink 3 to 4 litres per person per day, however individual needs may vary depending upon weather conditions and terrain. Avoid dehydration by drinking small amounts regularly.
- Avoid heat stress and sunburn – wear a hat, long-sleeved, loose clothing and apply sunscreen regularly.
- Stay on established trails and stand well back from cliff edges. Karijini's impressive gorges have very high vertical cliffs, and cliff edges can be loose and unstable.
- Take care in the gorges. Rocks are smooth and slippery, particularly when wet.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Hike with a companion.
- Plan to complete your hike before dark.



WARNING! Flash floods can occur at Karijini. If it rains while you are in the gorges please leave promptly. Do not enter gorges if rain is falling in the area.

Swimming

Gorge pools are often deep, shaded and very cold. Others, exposed to the sun, may be pleasant places for a quick dip.

- Water in the gorges can be very cold, especially between April and September, and hypothermia can occur. A wetsuit is recommended if prolonged swimming and exploration of the gorges is intended.
- Water depths vary. Do not dive or jump into the water.
- Submerged rocks or sticks may pose a risk to swimmers.

Other activities

- Some activities such as camping in non-designated areas, abseiling and canyoning will require permission from the Parks and Wildlife Service before being undertaken.
- Unauthorised drone use is prohibited.
- Glass and alcohol are not permitted in any gorges. Serious accidents have occurred.

Karijini Trail Classifications

Parks and Wildlife Service trails are assigned a 'Class' to indicate degree of difficulty. The trail classes range from Class 1 (universal access), which is suitable for wheelchairs, to Class 5, which require hikers to be fit, experienced and suitably equipped. Check trailhead signs at the start of trails for specific information. The trails in this brochure range from Class 2 to Class 5.



Class 2 This symbol indicates an easy, well-defined walk trail with a firm surface. You may encounter gentle hill sections and occasional steps. It is suitable for all levels of experience and fitness but may present difficulties for people with mobility impairments.



Class 3 This symbol indicates a moderate hiking 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 reasonable level of fitness is recommended.



Class 4 This symbol indicates a hiking trail with limited directional signage and difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long steep sections; water crossings; and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness and hiking experience is recommended.



Class 5 This symbol indicates a hiking trail with no directional signage and very difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long, steep sections and climbs; water crossings; and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced hikers should attempt. No part of these trails can be done in the dark.

Punurrunha (Mount Bruce)

The second-tallest peak in WA lies about 36km west of the ranger's office. A great opportunity to view the surrounding country.

Marandoo View

Class 2 500m return. Allow 30 minutes.

Follow the path from the Mount Bruce car park to view the Marandoo mine site. Excavation of ore for overseas markets began in July 1994.

Honey Hakea Track

Class 3 4.6km return. Allow 3 hours.

From the car park 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.

Mount Bruce Summit

Class 5 9km – 6 hours return.

Use the early morning hours to take the trail that leads up the western face of the mountain, past Marandoo View. No part of this trail should be attempted before sunrise or after sunset.

Ngirribungunha (Dales Gorge)

See the tranquil sunken gardens, deep sedge-fringed pools, and permanently cascading waterfalls.

Gorge Rim

Class 3 2.4km return. Allow 1 hour 45 minutes.

Follow the rim of Dales Gorge between Circular Pool Lookout and Fortescue Falls Lookout. White-barked snappy gums grow in the car park and around the edge of the gorge and shady groves of native cypress shelter on the cliff face. Enjoy the wonderful views into Dales Gorge. There are gentle slopes and some steps.

Jubula (Fortescue Falls)

Class 3 800m return. Allow 1 hour.

From the car park follow the path to the Fortescue Falls Lookout. Enjoy the views then take the steps down to the falls. Seats allow you to rest and take in the views.

Jubura (Fern Pool)

Class 4 600m return. Allow 30 minutes.

Optional detour. From the bottom of the steps at Fortescue Falls, take a short trail to Fern Pool.

Ngirribungunha (Dales Gorge)

Class 4 1km one way. Allow 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Experience gorge wildlife at close quarters from this creek-side trail between Fortescue Falls and Three Ways lookout. The trail is rough with many obstacles, it switches back and forth across the bottom of the gorge, often negotiating pools. There is also a ladder and steep stairs.

Jijingunha (Joffre Gorge) and Knox Gorge

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

Joffre Lookout

Class 3 240m return. Allow 20 minutes.

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

Joffre Waterfall

Class 5 1.3km return. Allow 2 hours.

For very experienced hikers. The track surface is rough and unformed. The trail crosses Joffre Creek. If the water is flowing strongly, do not proceed. The trail becomes Class 5 as it descends into the gorge.

Joffre View (optional)

Class 4 1.3km return. Allow 1.5 hours.

For experienced hikers. The first section follows the Joffre Waterfall Trail (see above). Instead of entering the gorge, continue along the rim for views further down Joffre Gorge.

Knox Gorge

Class 5 2km return. Allow 3 hours.

Take extreme care as you negotiate the loose flat rocks (talus slope) and large boulders as you climb down into the gorge. Skirt several pools and return from the 'Gorge Risk Area' sign.



Hancock and Weano Gorges

Experience the spectacular views, precipitous cliffs and narrow passages. Banded iron rock formations tower above you.

Oxer Lookout

Class 3 800m return. Allow 30 minutes.

Follow the sloping access path past the closed lookout, then follow a short trail with minor obstacles and a series of steps to the Oxer Lookout platform. Oxer Lookout can also be accessed from a small car park for those unable to hike the 800m.

Upper Weano Gorge

Class 4 1km return. Allow 45 minutes.

From the car park, take the trail north towards the top of Weano Gorge. Follow the trail down the gorge and return when you reach the steps.

Lower Weano Gorge, Handrail Pool

Class 5 1.2km return. Allow 1 hour and 30 minutes.

For very experienced and well-prepared hikers only.

A high level of fitness and agility is required. From the carpark, take the trail towards Weano Gorge. Read the trail head sign and safety information before taking the steps to the bottom. **Hike carefully downstream and use both hands on the handrail to climb down to Handrail Pool.**

Hancock Gorge, Kermits Pool

Class 5 1.5km return. Allow 2 hours.

For very experienced and well-prepared hikers only.

A high level of fitness and agility is required. From the trailhead sign, follow the trail to the edge of the gorge. There are numerous natural obstacles. Negotiate uneven rock steps to reach ladders. Descend ladders to the gorge floor and hike downstream to Kermits Pool. Hiking through water will be required. Change your shoes to those that can grip slippery wet rocks. Once you reach the stop sign, return the way you came.

Hamersley Gorge

This gorge has dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

Hamersley Waterfall

Class 4 200m return. Allow 30 minutes.

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

Spa Pool

Class 5 400m return. Allow 1 hour.

From Hamersley Waterfall it is a clamber over steeply angled rocks, followed by a swim, up to the picturesque Spa Pool.

Kalamina Gorge

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

Kalamina Gorge

Class 4 3km return. Allow 3 hours.

Descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream, or hike quietly on lemon-scented grass besides the stream; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool. Return the way you came.



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 the Karijini Visitor Centre. If staying at Karijini Eco Retreat, visitors are still required to pay a park entry fee.

A range of park passes are available at Parks and Wildlife Service offices, regional visitor centres and the Karijini Visitor Centre or online at shop.dbca.wa.gov.au.

Online bookings for Dales Campground sites are mandatory. Please book online before you visit Karijini as there is limited internet signal in the park.

Go to parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au.

Visitor centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre provides information and interpretation on the natural and cultural history of the park. Souvenirs, cool drinks, ice, hot showers, toilets and a public telephone are available. Contact the centre on (08) 9189 8121 for more information.

Access in the park

Universal access is available to a range of recreation sites and camping facilities in the park. Please enquire at the visitor centre for more information.

Caring for the park

Be responsible Do not pick wildflowers, remove rocks or artefacts or disturb wildlife. Glass and alcohol are not permitted in the gorges.

Be wise Do not contaminate pools with detergent, soap, shampoo or sunscreen.

Be cautious Stay on roads and trails to protect the environment. Road wash-outs can occur during heavy rain. Wet gravel roads are slippery and easily damaged, and may be closed after heavy rain.

Be clean Please do not drop cigarette butts in the park. Carry a rubbish bag and take all rubbish out with you. Please use the toilet before entering the gorges. Many toilets in national parks use a composting or biolytic system which is destroyed by chemicals. Please use sullage points provided in the park, nearby towns or at some 24-hour roadside stops.

Be careful Avoid starting bushfires. Use gas barbecues provided or portable cooking appliances. Ground fires and solid fuel fires are not permitted in the park. Dead wood provides homes for wildlife.

Help to protect Karijini National Park by following the **Leave No Trace** principles. For more information visit Int.org.au.



WARNING!

BLUE ASBESTOS PRESENT IN YAMPIRE GORGE

Asbestos dust may cause cancer when inhaled.

More information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Karijini National Park Visitor Centre

Ph: (08) 9189 8121
Karijini National Park
PO Box 29, Tom Price WA 6751

Ranger (emergency only)

Ph: (08) 9189 8147

Parks and Wildlife Service - Pilbara Regional Office

Mardie Road, Karratha Industrial Estate
PO Box 835, Karratha WA 6714
Ph: (08) 9182 2000

dbca.wa.gov.au



**Save the
app that
could save
your life**



emergencyplus.com.au

Download the free Emergency+ app before your visit. Use the app in an emergency to call for assistance. If there is no mobile phone coverage you **WILL NOT** be able to call **000** but the app will provide you with your GPS location.

Check for alerts and updates directly related to parks and major trails at alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au and for all emergency information in Western Australia at emergency.wa.gov.au.

Find more park visitor information, book campsites and share your experiences at exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au.

@waparkswildlife



@exploreparkswa



Information current at December 2022.

Publication available in alternative format on request.

Karijini National Park

