

DRAFT ONLY.

A SURVEY OF VISITORS TO THE HAMERSLEY RANGE NATIONAL PARK

APRIL - OCTOBER, 1984

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APRIL-OCTOBER 1984Introduction

In December, 1983, the National Parks Authority (W.A.) was offered funds for a project financed through the State's assistance scheme, administered by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. The Authority decided to use the funds to conduct a pilot visitor survey in selected National Parks, one of which was the Hamersley Range National Park.

To a certain extent the basic ground work of the pilot survey had been done in Kakadu National Park by the A.N.P.W.S. so the questionnaire format largely resembles the Kakadu Survey form with adaptations of some questions and the inclusion of the appropriate Park map. The purpose of the pilot survey was to initiate the process of documenting the 'people usage' of some of the State's National Parks. The assumption being that management decision making would be assisted by a more detailed understanding of the nature of human visitation to the parks.

Methodology

The survey was designed with three components:

- a mailback survey
- a field survey
- traffic counting

Unfortunately, due to the limit on time and resources it was not possible to spend extensive periods in the Park or to frequently visit the Park. Hence, only four days were spent conducting the field survey and the traffic counting. These results are considered too preliminary and not of significant consequence and so are not presented in this paper (see Jasper, 1984).

The mailback survey forms were sent to the Ranger in the Park just prior to Easter (20-25th, April) and the first forms were diligently handed out to the Easter visitors. It is estimated that approximately 600 forms had been distributed after 10 weeks although considerably more were distributed over 6 months. The total number of survey forms delivered between April and October is unknown. However, the total number of responses received by the N.P.A. (W.A.) (which was merged into the Department of Conservation and Land Management in March, 1985) was 227. The analysis below is compiled from this data. All data was entered onto six separate databases on an IBM personal computer using dbase III software.

Comments on Responses

1. Many visitors to the Park were not aware that Wittenoom is not in the National Park. The oversight is understandable as Wittenoom Gorge is physically part of the same system as the gorges within the Park.
2. If respondents showed that they have visited Wittenoom Gorge this has been recorded as a place visited, as an added piece of information.
3. Visitors may easily mistake the names of the gorges, especially in the Weano Gorge complex. To eliminate any misconceptions in gorge names and duration of visits, the Weano Gorge complex and the Dales Gorge complex have been treated as single units.
4. The category 'rock-climbing' in Question 10 has caused some confusion as it means different things to different people. Many people check this category when they have gone down into a gorge on a marked trail or path. It can also be used to refer to scaling gorge walls with ropes etc. It was intended to refer to the latter.
5. Question 9 is not completely satisfactory as some visitors completed the question by treating their current visit as 'once within the last 12 months' and thus have checked the 'once only' category. This can usually be rectified by checking Question 8, however to avoid any ambiguity, this question has been omitted from analysis.



HAMERSLEY RANGE NATIONAL PARK VISITOR SURVEY

Code
Form Number
Office use only

PLEASE FILL OUT ONE FORM PER VEHICLE

PLEASE CHECK BOUNDARIES OF THIS PARK ON MAP OVER PAGE

The National Parks Authority (WA) is responsible for the management of this National Park. This survey is being conducted concurrently in several of the State's major Parks. Please help us to manage this Park as effectively as possible by answering the following questions. Your answers will be anonymous, only your place of residence is sought.

Postage has already been paid for you to mail the completed form to the address indicated on the back. Please fold where indicated.

1 ON WHAT DATE DID YOU ENTER THE PARK/...../.....

2 HOW MANY TRAVELLED IN YOUR VEHICLE (DON'T FORGET YOURSELF).....

3 HOW MANY ARE IN EACH CATEGORY

	AGE Up to 12 yrs	13 to 20 yrs	21 to 40 yrs	41 to 60 yrs	Over 60 yrs
Male	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Female	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

4 WHAT IS EACH PERSON'S PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR COUNTRY IF OVERSEAS

TOWN/SUBURB/STATE	POSTCODE	NO. FROM EACH PLACE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

5 WHAT TYPE OF VEHICLE DID YOUR PARTY USE TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE PARK (Please tick the relevant box)

CONVENTIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMPERVAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOTOR CYCLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER (please specify).....	
4WD VEHICLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6 WHAT EQUIPMENT DID YOUR PARTY TAKE ALONG ON THIS TRIP

NONE	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARAVAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAILER	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAIL BIKE	<input type="checkbox"/>
GENERATOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	CHEMICAL TOILET	<input type="checkbox"/>
CAMPING	<input type="checkbox"/>		

OTHER (please specify).....

7 HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN THE PARK, i.e.DAYS.....NIGHTS

IF ON A DAY TRIP, HOW MANY HOURS.....

8 HOW MANY OF YOUR PARTY HAVE VISITED THE PARK BEFORE.....

9 IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HOW MANY OF YOUR PARTY VISITED THE PARK

ONLY ONCE	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-5 TIMES	<input type="checkbox"/>
MORE THAN 5 TIMES	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate the number of people in each category.

10 TOUR OPERATORS

PLEASE INDICATE THE NAME OF YOUR OPERATION.....


ANSWER QUESTIONS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

10 WHAT ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU DONE WHILE IN THE PARK ON THIS TRIP

WALKING
PICNICKING
RELAXING
SWIMMING

ROCK-CLIMBING
BIRD-WATCHING
PLANT OBSERVATION

OTHER (please specify).....

11 ON THE ATTACHED MAP PLEASE INDICATE (WITH ARROWS  TO SHOW DIRECTION) THE ROADS YOU USED TO ENTER AND LEAVE THE PARK AND ROADS YOU TRAVELLED WHILE IN THE PARK.

12 PLEASE SHOW THE PLACES YOU VISITED ON THIS TRIP BY:

- CIRCLING THE RELEVANT PLACE NAMES ON THE MAP
- MARKING ANY UNNAMED PLACES WITH AN "X"
- THE TIME SPENT (IN HOURS) AND THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AT EACH PLACE.

This information can probably best be written alongside the map, circled and arrowed to the site as shown by the example given.

13 PLEASE ALSO MAKE SURE YOU SHOW:

- IF YOU STAYED OVERNIGHT IN THE PARK WHERE YOU CAMPED AND HOW MANY NIGHTS AT EACH PLACE

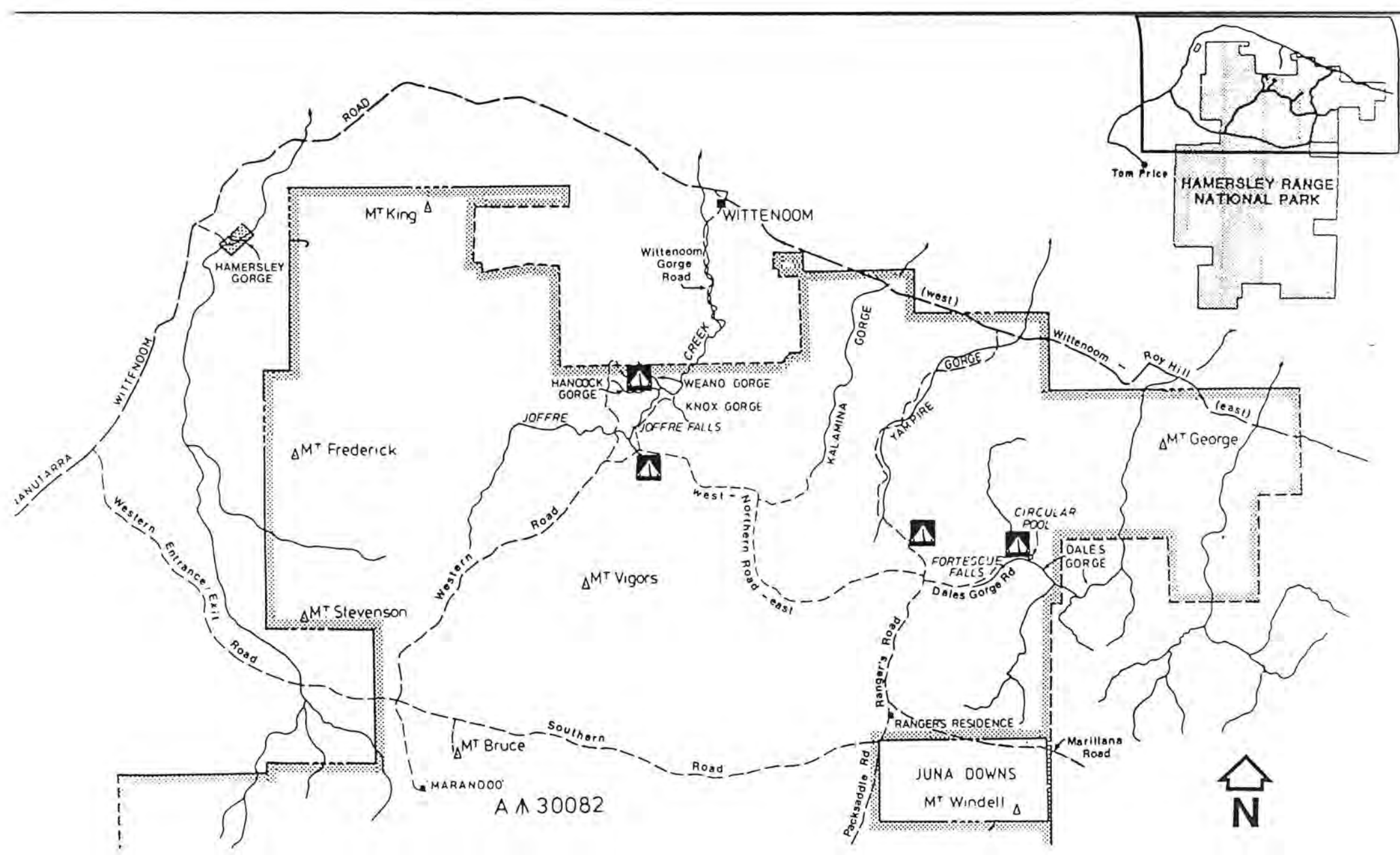
14 IF ON A DAY TRIP TO THE PARK:

WHERE DID MEMBERS OF YOUR PARTY STAY LAST NIGHT.
Place/Town.....
Type of accommodation (e.g. tent, caravan, hotel etc).....

WHERE DO MEMBERS OF YOUR PARTY PLAN TO STAY TONIGHT.
Place/Town.....
Type of accommodation (e.g. tent, caravan, hotel etc.).....

PLEASE MAKE ANY COMMENTS YOU WISH IN THE SPACE BELOW AND ON THE BACK PAGE ABOUT YOUR VISIT TO THE PARK, PARK MANAGEMENT, FACILITIES ETC.

..... thank you for your help.



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6. Question 14 was only completed by 31 (13.6%) of the respondents and of these, only 15 completed both halves of the question. For this reason, Question 14 was omitted from the analysis.

7. Many respondents indicated they had visited a particular location but did not say for how long. Such responses were tallied for each location.

RESULTS

Month of Visit

From the returned mail-back surveys and Table 1, it can be seen that the months of July, August and September are the peak visitation months. Over 35% of respondents visited the Park in August.

TABLE 1 - MONTH OF VISIT

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
April	1	0.4
May	2	0.9
June	23	10.1
July	59	26.0
August	80	35.2
September	54	23.8
October	8	3.6
	<u>227</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Age and Sex of Visitors

There is a 6% difference between the numbers of male and female visitors. From Table 2 it is obvious that most visitors are between 21 and 40 years old usually accompanied by children under 12. The deficiency in the number of teenage visitors is to be expected due to the remoteness and harshness of the area. Fairly high numbers of elderly people over 40 travel through the Park suggesting facilities should be mitigated for this age group.

TABLE 2 - DISTRIBUTION OF PARK VISITORS

<u>Years</u>	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
up to 12	74	11.84	58	9.28
13 - 20	11	1.76	4	0.64
21 - 40	118	18.88	116	18.56
41 - 60	77	12.32	81	12.96
over 60	<u>52</u>	<u>8.32</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>5.44</u>
	<u>332</u>	<u>53.12</u>	<u>293</u>	<u>46.88</u>

Total number of visitors = 625

Average number of visitors per vehicle = 3

Visitor catchment

Over 53% of respondents reside interstate and about 24% of respondents reside in the Perth metropolitan area. The interstate respondents account for over 80% of men aged over 60 years and 71% of women over 60 years.

TABLE 3 - RESIDENCE DISTRIBUTION OF PARK VISITORS

<u>Residence</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Perth	147	23.9
Pilbara	53	8.6
W.A. Country	60	9.8
Interstate	327	53.2
Overseas	<u>28</u>	<u>4.5</u>
	<u>615</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Missing cases: 10

Only 8.6% of respondents reside in the Pilbara region and mainly in the towns of Karratha and Port Hedland. This deficiency may be the result of local residents taking for granted their own tourist attractions.

Duration of Visit

The average duration spent in the Park is 2.9 (3) days and 2.6 (2-3) nights. Only 1.8% of respondents could be classified as day trippers indicating that 98.2% of visitors to the Park intend on camping at least one night.

TABLE 4 - NUMBER OF DAYS AND NIGHTS SPEND IN PARK

<u>Number of Days</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>	<u>Number of Nights</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
0	1	0.44	0	4	1.76
1	25	11.01	1	40	17.62
2	74	32.60	2	87	38.33
3	72	31.72	3	47	20.70
4	32	14.10	4	28	12.33
5	10	4.41	5	13	5.73
6	8	3.52	6	3	1.32
7	3	1.32	7	4	1.76
8	1	0.44	8	0	0.00
9	0	0.00	9	0	0.00
10	1	0.44	10	0	0.00
11	0	0.00	11	1	0.44
	<u>227</u>	<u>100.00</u>		<u>227</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Vehicles and Equipment

Respondents generally travelled in five different vehicle types. The majority of respondents used either conventional vehicles (two wheel-drive) or 4WD vehicles.

TABLE 5 - TYPE OF VEHICLE USED

<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Conventional	89	39.2
Motor cycle	2	0.9
4WD vehicle	92	40.5
Campervan	41	18.1
Motorhome	3	1.3
	<u>227</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Respondents were asked to check any or all of seven categories of equipment and to list any additional equipment brought with them. The reluctance of many respondents to list any surplus equipment resulted in a heavily weighted distribution towards the seven survey categories. Future surveys may benefit by presenting a thorough list of equipment likely to be brought in and pertaining to the National Park in question e.g. no respondent listed cameras/photographic equipment however many respondents listed photography as an activity.

TABLE 6 TYPES OF EQUIPMENT USED

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
None	12	5.3	Chem toilet	19	8.4
Trailer	31	13.7	Gas stove	3	1.3
Generator	31	13.7	Bush shower	1	0.4
Camping	140	61.7	Car fridge	2	0.8
Caravan	69	30.4	Canoe/raft	5	2.2
Trail bike	1	0.4	Fishing	1	0.4

Nearly 62% of respondents brought camping gear with them highlighting the importance of the 'camping experience' in natural surroundings for most people.

Recreation Activities

Respondents were asked to check any or all of seven categories of recreational activities and to list any additional activities undertaken during their visit. Interpretation of the 'rock-climbing' category has been discussed previously.

TABLE 7 - MAIN ACTIVITIES

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Walking	224	98.7
Picnicking	143	63.0
Relaxing	172	75.8
Swimming	111	48.9
Rock-climbing	140	61.7
Bird-watching	107	47.1
Plant obs.	142	62.6

TABLE 8 - OTHER ACTIVITIES

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Photography	69	30.4	Socialising	1	0.4
Wildlife obs.	3	1.3	Abseiling	2	0.9
Writing	1	0.4	Boat/canoeing	3	1.3
Video filming	9	3.9	Talking	2	0.9
Geol. study	6	2.6	Board games	1	0.4
Drawing/Painting	5	2.2	Love making	1	0.4

The number of respondents listing photography as an additional activity is likely to be an under-estimate of the true number of respondents utilizing cameras. The most common activities were associated with a relaxing stay in the Park while some respondents engaged in specific activities such as abseiling and canoeing.

Campsites

There are four campsites in the Park: the Circular Pool campsite, the Weano Gorge campsite, the campsite along Yampire Gorge Road (called here the Yampire Gorge campsite) and the campsite near the Weano T junction (called here the Joffre campsite). The majority of respondents camped at these sites, however other campsites, including Wittenoom and Tom Price, were recorded as added information.

Respondents were also asked to indicate (in hours) the time spent at each feature in the Park. For those respondents who visited a particular feature without recording the amount of time spent at that feature, a separate tally was kept and is shown in Table 10.

TABLE 9 - FREQUENCY OF CAMPSITE USE

<u>Campsite</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Total Number of nights</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Weano Gorge	89	156	39.2
Joffre	45	72	19.8
Yampire Gorge	38	52	16.7
Circular Pool	151	248	66.5
Wittenoom	25	36	11.0
Hamersley Gorge	8	8	3.5
Bee Gorge	1	2	0.4
Kalamina Gorge	1	1	0.4
Tom Price	2	2	0.9
Ranger's Residence	1	3	0.4
Roadside	3	3	1.3

Almost twice the number of respondents chose to camp at the Circular Pool campsite rather than the Weano Gorge campsite. These figures highlight the pressures on various campsites and management should give the heavily visited campsites priority over those less visited campsites.

TABLE 10 - MOST COMMONLY VISITED FEATURES

<u>Features</u>	<u>Time spent (hrs)</u>	<u>Additional Visits</u>
Hamersley Gorge	89	34
Wittencoom Gorge	128	75
Weano Gorge Complex	984	67
Kalamina Gorge	219	57
Yampire Gorge	56	51
Dales Gorge Complex	777	70
Mt Bruce	38	5
Wittencoom	29	3
Tom Price	8	0
Bee Gorge	6	0

It is interesting to note that the Circular Pool campsite had the greater number of camp-nights but respondents spent more time at the Weano Gorge complex rather than the Dales Gorge complex. This is possibly indicative of the lengths of time spent by respondents in descending the gorges.

Entrance and Exit Roads

There are several access roads in the north of the Park, the two major roads being the Yampire Gorge Road and the Western Entrance/Exit Road (see map). Those roads used to enter and exit the Park by each respondent are listed in Tables 11 and 12.

TABLE 11 - ENTRANCE ROADS

<u>Roads</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Wittencoom - Roy Hill Rd (West)	122	55.5
Wittencoom - Roy Hill Rd (East)	42	19.1
Yampire Gorge Rd	13	5.9
Western Entrance	33	15.0
Packsaddle Rd	<u>10</u>	<u>4.5</u>
	<u>220</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Missing cases:	7	

Since respondents were asked to indicate (with arrows) which roads they travelled on, some inconsistency arose in the entrance and exit roads, and the number of times each road was traversed. Each road section was coded and tallied as separate units. Hence, respondents entering the Park via the Wittenoom-Roy Hill Road also entered via the Yampire Gorge Road i.e. 80.5% of respondents entered the Park via Yampire Gorge Road.

TABLE 12 - EXIT ROADS

<u>Roads</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. Freq. (%)</u>
Nanutarra-Wittenoom Rd	4	1.9
Wittenoom-Roy Hill Rd (West)	82	38.1
Wittenoom-Roy Hill Rd (East)	26	12.1
Yampire Gorge Road	7	3.3
Packsaddle Road	7	3.3
Marillana Road	1	0.5
Western Exit	<u>88</u>	<u>40.8</u>
	<u>215</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Missing cases: 12		

53.5% of respondents left the Park via Yampire Gorge Road and 40.8% of respondents left the Park via the Western Entrance/Exit Road.

Total Road Usage

The majority of responses to the map question indicated clearly the routes taken and the number of times each road was travelled on. Several responses were vague and foresight was used to determine the number of times particular roads were used. e.g. if a respondent indicated that they visited Dales Gorge, then the Dales Gorge Road must have been used twice (once in, once out) as there is no other option. Table 13 shows the total number of times each road was used. Several of the internal road names listed apply only to this survey.

TABLE 13 - TOTAL ROAD USAGE

<u>Road</u>	<u>Times Used</u>
Nanutarra-Wittenoom	96
Wittenoom-Roy Hill (West)	262
Wittenoom-Roy Hill (East)	71
Wittenoom Gorge Road	234
Yampire Gorge Road	310
Dales Gorge Road	472
Northern Road (West)	318
Northern Road (East)	303
Ranger's Road	37
Western Road	131
Southern Road	11
Mt Bruce Road	42
Western Entrance Road	125

The Weano Gorge Road, Joffe/Red Gorges Road and the Kalamina Gorge Road were not included in the analysis as these roads are obviously the most frequently used. Similarly, the Dales Gorge Road showed the highest level of use in Table 13. Management should ensure these roads in particular are kept in good condition. The Yampire Gorge Road is the major access road and should also be kept in good condition. Likewise, the Northern Road which interconnects the gorges is frequently used.

Analysis of Comments

Respondents were asked to comment on their visit to the Park, Park management, facilities etc. Comments were varied although most respondents gave favourable remarks. For most of the points raised, the attitude or view was unanimous i.e. all respondents agreed or disagreed on particular issues. A few of the points raised, however, held mixed views and it is these issues which management should aim to amend.

TABLE 14 - VISITOR REMARKS

Point Raised	Predominantly Favourable Remarks	
	F	U
1. Ranger's help etc	117	0
2. Toilets	57	2
3. Campsites	44	9
4. Road standard	37	17
5. Litter	32	0
6. Firewood availability	27	1
7. BBQ's and picnic sites	18	4
8. Trails and walks	15	9
9. Access to wilderness area	2	1

	Predominantly Unfavourable Remarks	
	F	U
1. Water availability	1	46
2. Interpretation	3	33
3. Signposting	14	20
4. Generators	0	18
5. Safety signs in gorges	2	13
6. Fees charged	2	12
7. Coach parties	0	3
8. Access to southern part	0	3
9. Asbestos fibres	0	2
10. Aboriginal land claims	0	2
11. Water quality	0	1
12. White's tourist complex	0	1

Those issues of varying concern were road standard, trails and walks and signposting which, in this case, were closely related. Regarding the standard of roads, most of the unfavourable remarks expressed concern at the Dales Gorge Road. Considering the extremely high level of use associated with this road (see Table 13), management should aim to keep it in good condition by regular upgrading.

In general, trails and walks received favourable remarks. Any criticism of them was usually based on the lack of sufficient signposting along the trails as several respondents, particularly elderly visitors lost their way on certain gorge walks. This could result in serious consequences. Any additional signs and markers along the gorge trails should not detract from the natural beauty of the landscape.

Several respondents expressed concern at the lack of sufficient road signs (indicating turn-offs, warning of dips etc). This problem could possible be overcome with greater interpretation availability.

General comments and suggestions are tabulated in descending order of the number of times mentioned.

TABLE 15 - GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. %</u>
1. Spectacular scenery	48	21.1
2. Need more time	22	9.7
3. Showers needed	19	8.4
4. Safety railings at lookouts/along trails	11	4.8
5. Tent area needed	10	4.4
6. BBQ design	10	4.4
7. Interpretation on geol./landscape needed	10	4.4
8. Separate generator area needed	10	4.4
9. Don't commercialize	8	3.5
10. Times of walks and hazards info. needed	8	3.5
11. Red dust problem	7	3.1
12. More campsites needed	6	2.6
13. Enjoy upspoiled atmosphere	6	2.6
14. Warning signs for dips in roads needed	6	2.6
15. Interpretation on gorges needed	6	2.6
16. Extra toilets at Weano campsite	6	2.6
17. Road adjoining Weano Gorge & Wittenoom Gorge	6	2.6
18. Campsite too small	4	1.8
19. Don't want bitumen roads	4	1.8
20. No charge for day visitors? query	4	1.8
21. High tourist potential	4	1.8

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rel. %</u>
22. More BBQ's needed	3	1.3
23. Pollution of gorges (no showers)	3	1.3
24. Honesty box	2	0.9
25. Campsite design	2	0.9
26. Rehabilitate mine at Wittenoom Gorge	2	0.9
27. Pump water from gorges	2	0.9
28. Increase funding to N.P.A.	2	0.9
29. Proposed lookout at NDB Tower	1	0.4
30. Cliffside walk-trail	1	0.4
31. Cost cf. Geikie - HRNP a rip off	1	0.4
32. No graffiti	1	0.4
33. Swing bridge over gorge	1	0.4
34. Ranger to give regular education talks	1	0.4
35. Mt Bruce track needs attention	1	0.4
36. Ladder down Weano Gorge	1	0.4
37. Firewood too close to BBQ	1	0.4
38. Enclosures for dogs at campsites	1	0.4
39. Changing sheds at swimming locations	1	0.4
40. Fences	1	0.4
41. Feral animals (stray cattle)	1	0.4
42. More staff needed	1	0.4

From the correlation between the comments and suggestions of Table 15 above and the points raised in Table 14, the following can be drawn:

The friendliness and courtesy of the rangers was unanimously appreciated.

Toilets were remarked on favourably although six respondents suggested extra toilets at the Weano campsite.

Campsites were generally satisfactory although many respondents expressed a need for showers, isolated generator areas and separate tent areas (with peggable soil). Several respondents also suggested more campsites as existing ones are too small. For dog-lovers, one person suggested dog enclosures at each campsite.

The road standard was discussed earlier, however seven respondents were critical of the red dust problem, several suggested a road connecting Wittenoom Gorge and Weano Gorge and a few even expressed their dislike of bitumen roads.

Remarks on litter were unanimously favourable and one respondent was surprised at the lack of any graffiti. All respondents appreciated the availability of firewood but one visitor thought it was stacked too close to the barbecue.

Barbecues were generally complimented but several respondents suggested an alternative design. A few visitors thought more BBQ's were needed.

Trails and walks were also mentioned earlier. Many respondents suggested safety railings at lookouts and along particular trails as many elderly people and children visit these areas. One respondent suggested a cliffside walk-trail and one respondent expressed concern at the condition of the Mt Bruce Track.

The lack of available water at campsites was a major concern for many visitors. A few visitors disliked the pollution of the gorges by soaps and shampoos as there were no showers nor water at the campsites. Two respondents even suggested to pump water from the gorges for use at the campsites.

Interpretation was generally depauperate. Many visitors requested information on flora, geology, landscape, times of walks, hazards etc and one respondent suggested the ranger should give regular educational talks in Wittenoom, on the Park and Park management.

Signposting was mainly criticised as mentioned earlier. There is a need for more road signs and trail markers. Informative signs are associated with interpretation boards etc.

The use of generators was unanimously criticised. There is a strong need to isolate visitors who use generators from visitors who don't.

Several respondents felt the need for safety and hazard signs along gorge trails.

The fees charged by the Authority discontented several campers as they wondered, 'why they should pay for the use of the same facilities that day visitors use for free'. Two respondents suggested the use of an 'honesty box'.

For those respondents who commented, the general concensus was opposed to large coach parties, access to the southern Park, asbestos fibres, aboriginal land claims and the White's proposed tourist complex.

Summary

In December, 1983, the National Parks Authority (W.A.) was offered funds for a project financed through the State's assistance scheme, administered by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. A pilot visitor survey was conducted in selected National Parks, one of which was the Hamersley Range National Park.

All 227 returned mailback questionnaires were analysed on an IBM personal computer using dbaseIII software.

Visitor Characteristics

Over 35% of respondents visited the Park in August. The peak visitation months were July, August and September. On the average, three visitors travelled per vehicle. Over 37% of visitors were aged between 21 and 40 years and over 39% of visitors were aged over 40 years suggesting facilities should be mitigated for this age group. Over 53% of Park visitors reside interstate indicating the Hamersley Range National Park is largely an interstate Park.

Equipment Used

On the average campers stayed in the Park for 2.9 (3) days and 2.6 (2-3) nights. 40% of them travelled in four-wheel-drive vehicles (although there is no evidence of any off-road driving) and 30% travelled in conventional two-wheel-drive vehicles. Nearly 62% of visitors brought camping gear with them highlighting the importance of the 'camping experience'. Over 30% brought caravans.

Activities

Of the recreational activities undertaken, the most common were associated with a relaxing stay in the Park e.g. walking, relaxing, picnicking, plant observation, while some respondents engaged in specific activities such as abseiling and canoeing. Management can facilitate both passive and active forms of recreation by increasing available interpretation.

General comments relating to trails and walks were varied. In particular, it was suggested that more trail markers be placed along gorge trails and that safety railings be installed at lookouts and along gorge trails in precarious places.

Campsites

There are four campsites within the Park: the Circular Pool campsite, the Weano Gorge campsite, the Yampire Gorge campsite and the campsite near the Weano T junction (Joffre campsite).

The two most popular campsites by far are the Circular Pool and Weano Gorge campsites with over 66% and 40% of campers respectively. Management should give these campsites priority over the lesser used campsites. On the whole, most visitor time was spent at the Weano complex of gorges followed by the Dales Gorge complex. This is probably the result of extended lengths of time spent climbing the individual Weano gorges.

Comments were largely favourable regarding campsites and their facilities. It was suggested that extra toilets be installed at the Weano Gorge campsite or likewise create a fifth campsite as existing ones were too small (possibly at Kalamina Gorge). There is a need for showers and water storage capability at campsites, especially water availability. Several respondents suggested separate tent areas (with peggable soil) while the use of generators was unanimously criticised. In general, barbecues were favourably complimented although several visitors suggested alternative designs. A few visitors thought that more BBQ's were needed. For dog-lovers, one person suggested dog enclosures at each campsite.

Road Usage

The Yampire Gorge Road was used by 80.5% of respondents as an entrance road to the Park and by 53.5% of respondents as an exit road. Management must direct attention to this road. The Western Entrance Road was used by 15% of visitors as an entrance road and by 41% of visitors as an exit road.

Of the interior roads, the Weano Gorge Road, Joffre/Red Gorges Road and the Kalamina Gorge Road were not included in the analysis as they are obviously the most frequently used. Dales Gorge Road showed the highest level of use amongst the remaining interior roads. General comments relating to road standard were generally favourable although there were several criticisms of the condition of Dales Gorge Road and the problems associated with red dust. A road connecting Wittenoom and Weano Gorges was suggested by several respondents.

Attitudes

Aside from the suggestions and attitudes expressed above, there were several other comments not suiting these categories.

The friendliness and courtesy of the rangers was unanimously acknowledged (by over 51% of all respondents). Similarly, the overall cleanliness of the Park and the campsites received many complimentary remarks. Interpretation was generally depauperate (non-existent to some respondents) as many visitors asked for information on the flora, geology, landscape, times of walks, hazards etc. A significant increase in interpretation availability would promote the respectibility of the Department in addition to the satisfaction of the visitor.

There were also mixed attitudes towards signposting in (and outside) the Park. In particular, road signs to indicate turn-offs, warn of dips etc were of some concern. Finally, the fees charged to overnight campers were generally disconcerting as they wondered 'why they should pay for the use of the same facilities that day visitors use for free'.

References

Jasper, R.J. (1984), 'Pilot Visitor Survey in Selected National Parks'.
Unpublished Report for NPA (W.A.).