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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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**KARIJINI**  
HAMERSLEY RANGE

National Park



**CARE FOR THE PARK**

**BE CAUTIOUS:** Stay on roads marked on this map. Wet roads are slippery, for your safety wait until roads dry out. Roads may be closed after heavy rain. Watch out for wildlife.

**BE KIND:** Do not disturb animals, plants or rocks. Pets and firearms are not permitted.

**BE GENTLE:** Do not use soap in the pools as it kills aquatic life. Avoid pool contamination with sun cream. Stay on formed trails.

**BE COOL:** Avoid causing wildfires, by using a portable gas stove or the gas barbecues provided.

**BE CLEAN:** Put litter in bins, or better still take it with you.

**WARNING**



**BLUE ASBESTOS PRESENT  
IN YAMPIRE GORGE**

Asbestos dust when inhaled may cause cancer. Refer to the *Blue Asbestos Present* brochure. Alternative park entry / exits are available.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

National park rangers are always glad to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. Do not hesitate to contact them if you require any information or assistance.

Karijini National Park  
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Telephone: (091) 89 8157  
Fax: (091) 89 9104

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

**VISITOR AND WALK TRAIL  
GUIDE**

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 the State's second biggest national park, spreading over more than 600 000 square kilometres.

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.

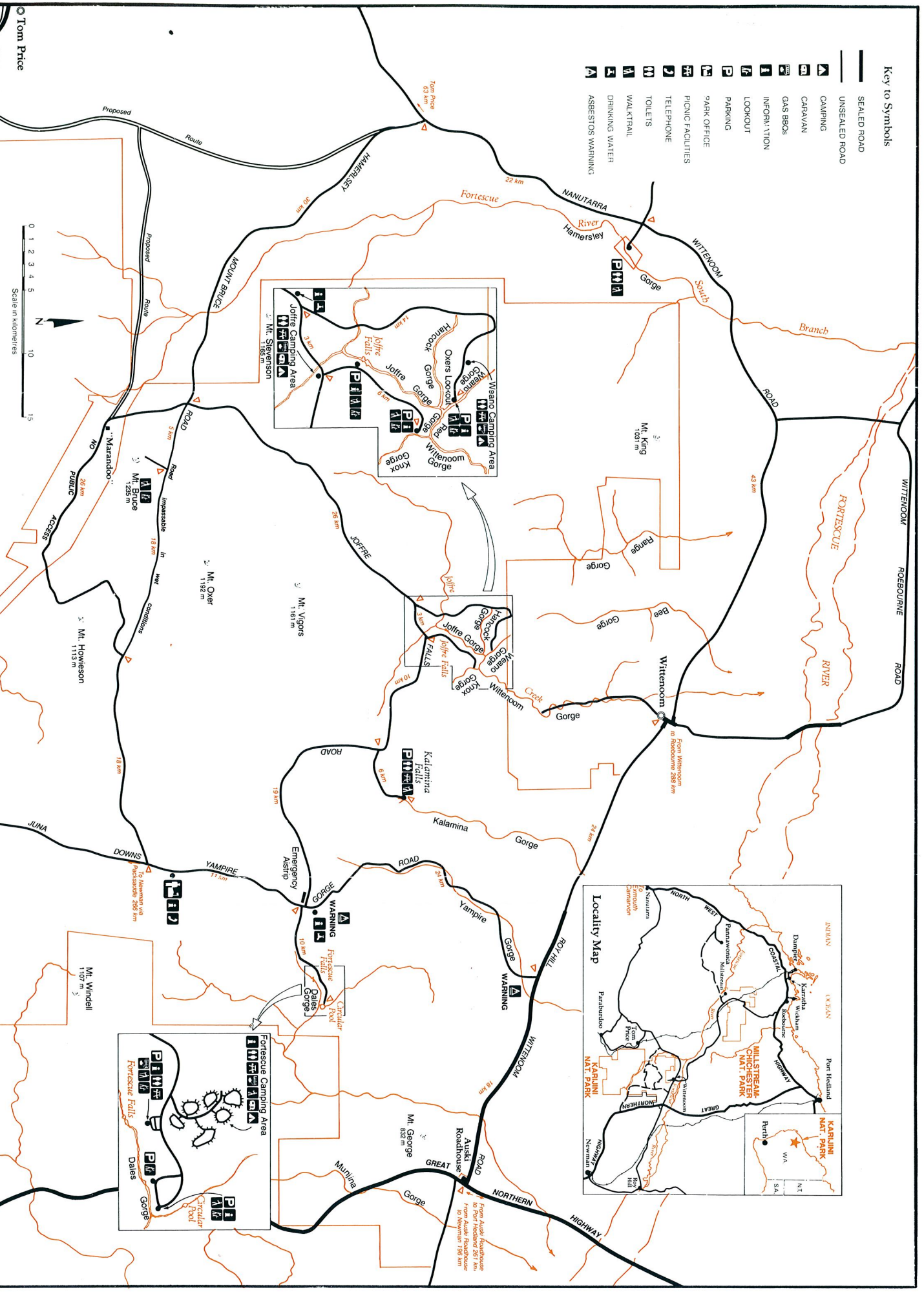
This is an ancient part of the Earth. The slow process of erosion has carved the shape of the land out of rocks 2 000 million years old to form this intriguing landscape and complex ecology.

A variety of ecosystems are represented in the park. These range from precipitous gorges, sheltering 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 in drainage lines.

Most of the southern half of the park is largely inaccessible. Visitors concentrate on the spectacular gorges in the north, with rock pools, waterfalls and unique wildlife. Lookouts, walk trails, camping areas and information shelters are provided to make your visit safe, enjoyable and informative.

**INFORMATION**

Information shelters are in place at several sites indicated on the map. A bird list and information on the geology of the gorges are available from the ranger and Regional office. Park Notes provide updated information and details about recreational activities and management issues.





## TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Panyjima, Inawonga and Kurrama Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, call the Hamersley Range Karjini. The recent name change of the Park recognises the historic and continuing significance of the area to these people and their involvement in park management.

Evidence of their ancestors' occupation dates back more than 20 000 years. Over that period Aboriginal land management practices such as 'fire stick farming', resulting in a diversity of vegetation types and stages of succession, have helped determine the nature of the plants and animals found in the park today.

## CLIMATE

Situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, the park's climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. A highly variable, mainly summer, rainfall of 250-350 mm, often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones, is accompanied by temperatures frequently topping 40° Celsius. The ideal time to visit the park is winter and spring. Winter days are warm and clear, but nights are cold and sometimes frosty.

## GEOLOGY

The banded iron formations exposed in many of the rocks in and around the gorges originated over 2 500 million years ago as iron and silica-rich sediment deposits that accumulated on an ancient sea-floor. Over many millions of years these iron-rich 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 sculptured the rocks into the present landscape.

## THE GORGES

In the north of the park small creeksbeds hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year suddenly plunge down chasms up to 100 metres deep. 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 walk trails to 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 flower. 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.

Birds are many and varied, especially in fringing vegetation along pools and streams. If you are observant you may encounter red kangaroos, euros (the common kangaroos of the rocky country), bats, dingoes or the very rare Rothschild's rock wallaby.

Many species of native rodents and native marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara Ningui are resident but are nocturnal and shy. Reptiles such as frogs, geckoes, goannas, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes abound within the park.

Two interesting wildlife homes are the huge termite nests and the rock piles of the pebble-mound mouse. Both are common on the track to the junction of Knox and Red Gorges. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB THEM.



## WALK TRAIL GUIDE

### HANCOCK AND WEANO

#### GORGES

Spectacular views, precipitous cliffs and narrow passages. Banded iron rock formations tower over the valleys far below.

#### Gorge Rim 1 km - 1 hr return

Follow the rim of the gorge between Circular Pool and Dales Gorge car park. Wonderful views.

#### Callitris Track 1 km - 1 hr return

Proceed from Dales Gorge car park around the gorge rim to Fortescue Falls car park above shady groves of native cypress sheltering on the cliff face below.

**Fortescue Falls 800 m - 1 hr return**  
Reached by descending a steep trail from the carpark and following a narrow path. Refreshing swim in the spring-fed permanent falls.

**Handrail Pool 600 m - 1 hr return**  
Follow a steep, winding track past gnarled, white snappy gums. Soon high walls of rock tower above you as you climb down to the chilly pool in Weano Gorge.

#### Circular Pool 800 m - 2 hrs return

After a steep descent ramble along the gorge floor to the fern-framed pool. Take a dip before retracing your steps.

#### Dales Gorge 1.5 km - 3 hrs return

Experience gorge life at close quarters from this creek-side trail between Fortescue Falls and Circular Pool Trail.

#### Hancock Gorge 1.5 km - 3 hrs return

Journey to the "centre of the earth" down this steep, narrow gorge. Feel the highly polished rocks on the way down to "Kermitt's Pool".

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO ...

### CAMPING

Camping is permitted ONLY at those sites indicated on the map. Caravan, bus and generator sites are available at Dales. Facilities include bush toilets, gas barbecues and picnic tables.

**BE QUIET:** Generators must be turned off by 9.00 pm. Make sure your activities do not spoil the enjoyment of others.

### FEES

Fees are charged for camping and should be placed in the collection boxes provided.

### WATER

Drinking water is available from tanks located at those sites indicated on the map. Carry plenty of water at all times.

### LOOKOUTS

Lookout structures have been installed at Knox Gorge, Joffre Gorge, Circular Pool and at the junction in Dales Gorge.

**BE CAREFUL:** Serious accidents have occurred! Please take extra care around gorge rims. Many areas are loose underfoot. Do not throw rocks as there may be walkers below. **YOUR SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

### BUSHWALKING

Choose an appropriate trail presented in the guide overleaf to help you to explore the gorges.

**BE PREPARED:** Go with at least two other people, wear protective clothing and sturdy walking shoes, and take plenty of water. Consult rangers where necessary.

### SWIMMING

In most gorges you will find permanent pools of clear, fresh water. Some are deep, shaded and very cold while others, exposed to the sun, may be pleasant places for a quick dip.

**BEWARE:** Wet rocks are slippery. Water is extremely cold from April to September and hypothermia can occur.

### KALAMINA GORGE

A great introduction to the gorge system, a delightful trail and picnicking.

### HAMERSLEY GORGE

Quite different again. Dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

**Kalamina Gorge 3 km - 3 hrs return**  
Walk out to the rock platform overlooking the pools and waterfall. Then descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream or stroll quietly down the stream filled with lemon-scented grass; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool.

**Hamersley Waterfall 400 m - 30 min return.**  
This track begins as steps, allowing access for most visitors. Everchanging light, amazing colours and reflections highlight the complex geological forces in this spectacular landscape.

**Hamersley Gorge 1 km - 3 hrs return.**  
Follow this route past still pools and polished boulders to the "Grotto", a fern-lined chasm partly hidden in the side of the gorge.

**Mt Bruce (Punurrunha) 2 km - 4 hrs return**  
The second tallest peak in WA lies about 36 kilometres west of Ranger Headquarters. Use the early morning hours to take the route which leads up a steep slope on the north face to a spectacular view. A rewarding challenge.

#### Gorge Rim 1 km - 1 hr return

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### ROUTES (LEVEL 2)

are for very experienced, well-equipped, fit bushwalkers. These trails extend into Weano, Hancock, Red, Joffre and Knox Gorges. Details must be obtained from the ranger before embarking.