

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 It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

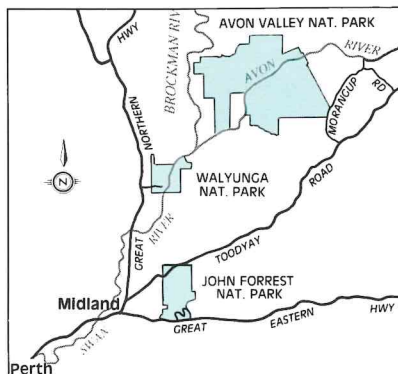
Avon Valley National Park is 45 km from Midland along Toodyay, Morangup and Quarry Roads.

The park features forests and granite outcrops, panoramic views over the Avon Valley, and the chance to see a wide variety of birds and wildlife.

The Avon River flows in winter and spring when the river churns over spectacular rapids. It is dry in summer and autumn.

There are some picnic facilities and basic camping sites. The small amount of development means much of the park has wilderness qualities. The best time to visit is in the cooler months.


A self registration entry station has been established on Quarry Road near the junction with Morangup road. Visitors are required to pay the park entry fee at this point before entering the park.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Avon Valley National Park
PO Box 181
Toodyay WA 6566
Tel: (08) 9574 2540

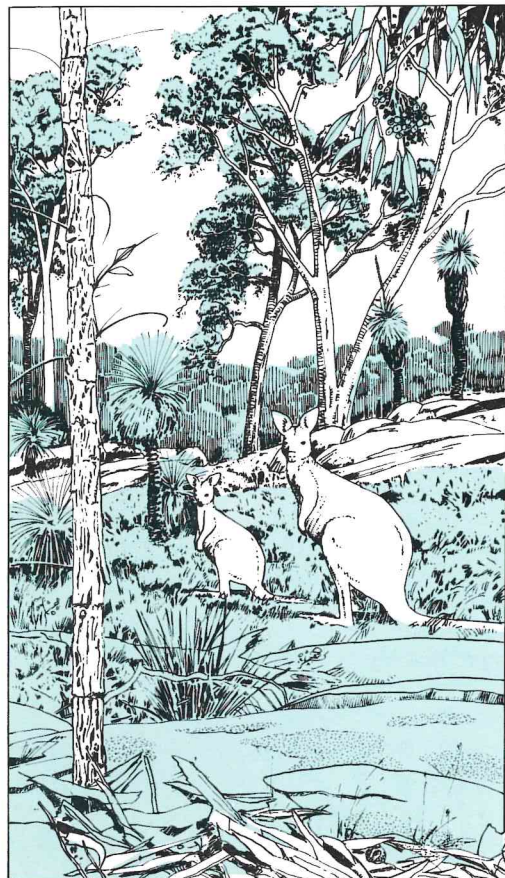
or write to:

 Department of Conservation
and Land Management

Weir Road
Mundaring WA 6073
Tel: (08) 9295 1955

AVON VALLEY

National Park



 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND
LAND MANAGEMENT

A FOREST OF CHANGE

From summer to winter, from north to south, and from high outcrops to deep river and stream valleys, the forests of Avon Valley National Park are constantly changing.

WHERE WOODLANDS MEET FORESTS

Avon Valley National Park is at the northern limit of the jarrah forests. Here, the jarrah and marri mingle with wandoo woodland. This mix of trees, or 'transitional forest', creates diverse habitats for plants and animals.

More than 90 species of birds have been seen in the park, including grey fantails, rufous treecreepers, western yellow robins and several types of honeyeaters. Rainbow bee-eaters and sacred kingfishers arrive to breed in the spring, and can often be heard calling.

Many of the smaller birds move down the slopes in the summer to take advantage of the greater number of insects and the continued growth of the plants where the soil is deeper.

The two species of wandoo tend to grow on heavier soils underlain with clay. The smooth trunks of wandoo change colour from white to creamy-grey in autumn while powderbark wandoo turns orange.

Powderbark wandoo is covered in a fine powder-try to find one to touch.

Jarrah grows on the higher slopes and ridges where the soil is shallow and well drained. Deep roots allow jarrah to continue growing throughout the year. Marri grows further down the slope where the soil is deeper and more moist. Flooded gum and swamp paperbark grow along the river.

UNDERSTAND THE UNDERSTOREY

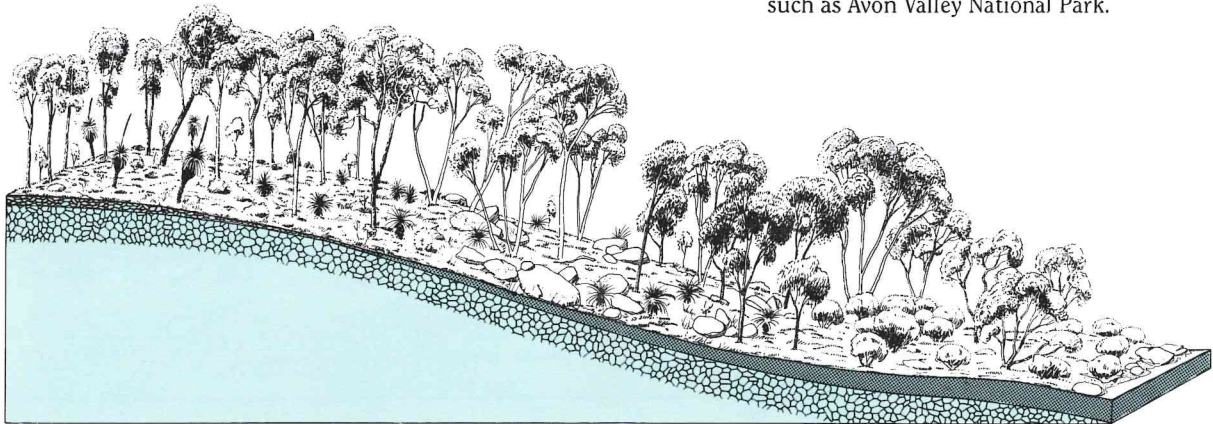
The grass trees are an important part of the understorey in the park. Many animals depend on them for food and shelter. Skinks and geckos hunt among the thick crowns for insects. Birds such as honeyeaters are attracted to the nectar in the flowering stalks. Honey possums and western pigmy possums often rest safely in the thick beard of dead leaves.

Grass trees were important for Aboriginal people. The starchy bases of the leaves were eaten, a thick resin was extracted and melted as a glue for making tools, and nectar was collected from the flower stalks.

A variety of plants make up the understorey of the forests. Blue lechenaultias, dryandras and donkey orchids are just a few that flower in the spring.

Among the understorey, chuditch may still occasionally be found. These small native mammals were common in the area until foxes and cats reduced their numbers to the present low levels.

CALM has programs to reduce fox numbers and to reintroduce small mammals to natural habitats such as Avon Valley National Park.



GRANITE OUTCROPS

Granite outcrops add to the diversity of the park. A variety of low shrubs and small lichens and mosses cling to the rocks. Lizards such as bobtail skinks and rock dragons sun themselves on the rocks to warm their blood.

Sure-footed euros (adapted to life in rocky areas) and western grey kangaroos come out to graze in the evening and on rainy days.

GUNPOWDER AND POWDER-BARK

The peacefulness of the park may lead us to believe the Avon Valley was always so. One of the first Europeans to venture into this area was Joseph Bolitho Johns, the bushranger known as Moondyne Joe.

His notorious ability to escape detention made him Western Australia's most famous bushranger. In the 1860s, he repeatedly returned to this area as it was then one of the wildest and most inaccessible places in the Darling Ranges.

From the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, the area was used by the Commonwealth Government as a military training area for National Service soldiers.

THE RIVER RUNS DRY

The contrast between winter and summer is dramatic. The Avon River can be run by experienced canoeists in winter, and is made famous by the Avon Descent each August. In summer, the river slows to a trickle, becoming a series of shallow pools unsuitable for swimming. Walk carefully near the pools and you may hear several types of frogs, including slender tree frogs or motorbike frogs—yes, they sound like a motorbike—or see fish, crustaceans and even long-necked tortoises.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES FOR THE PLANTS MENTIONED

blue lechaenaultia	<i>Lechenaultia biloba</i>
donkey orchid	<i>Diuris sp.</i>
dryandra	<i>Dryandra sp.</i>
flooded gum	<i>Eucalyptus rudis</i>
grass trees	<i>Kingia australis</i> <i>Xanthorrhoea sp.</i>
jarrah	<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>
marri	<i>Eucalyptus calophylla</i>
swamp paperbark	<i>Melaleuca rhamniphylla</i>
powderbark wandoo	<i>Eucalyptus accedens</i>
wandoo	<i>Eucalyptus wandoo</i>

CARING FOR AVON VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

- ❖ **Protect animals and plants:** No firearms or pets. All native plants and animals are protected in the park.
- ❖ **Be clean:** Put litter in bins or, better still, take it home with you.
- ❖ **Be cool:** Light fires only in fireplaces provided, or bring a portable gas stove. On days of 'Very High' or 'Extreme' fire danger, check with the ranger before lighting your gas stove.
- ❖ **Be aware:** Stay on the road at all times. Watch out for oncoming vehicles on the narrow roads.
- ❖ **Be prepared:** Carry water at all times.
- ❖ **Be careful:** A major railway line follows the Avon River in the park. Extreme care should be taken when crossing this busy line.

GETTING AROUND

The roads within the park are all unsealed, and often narrow, so watch out for oncoming traffic. The nearest telephone, petrol and food outlets are at Gidgegannup or Toodyay, 30 km from the park.

CAMPING

The camping grounds have wood barbecues, picnic tables and pit toilets. Water is available in the camping grounds at Bald Hill, Homestead, Drummonds and Valley camp sites.

A fee is charged for camping in the park. A self-registration system is available as you enter the park.

Note: The steep and rough roads are not suitable for caravans or trailers.

WALKING

If you intend to walk off the marked tracks, or to camp away from the camping grounds, please let the ranger know beforehand.

Suggestions:

- ❖ bring binoculars and a camera for the views and wildlife,
- ❖ bring plenty of water to drink and avoid strenuous walking on hot days,
- ❖ make sure you have a topographic map and compass if you plan to go on the long tracks.

