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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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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 some 627,442 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 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 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.

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, Karijini Visitor Centre, or before visiting the park at Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) offices or Pilbara Visitor Centres. At the camping areas, please deposit your camping fees in the collection boxes provided.

Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre provides information and interpretation on the natural and cultural history of the park. Camera film, souvenirs, cool drinks and ice are available and there are showers, toilets and a public telephone adjacent to the car park.

Access in the park

There is assisted wheelchair access to Junction Pool Lookout, the Weano Day Use area and Circular Pool Lookout. Independent wheelchair access is available at the Karijini National Park Visitor Centre and the Dales Day Use Area.

Care for the park

Driving or walking on spinifex kills plants and upsets important habitats. Please drive, walk and camp only on the hard pan surfaces signposted for this purpose.

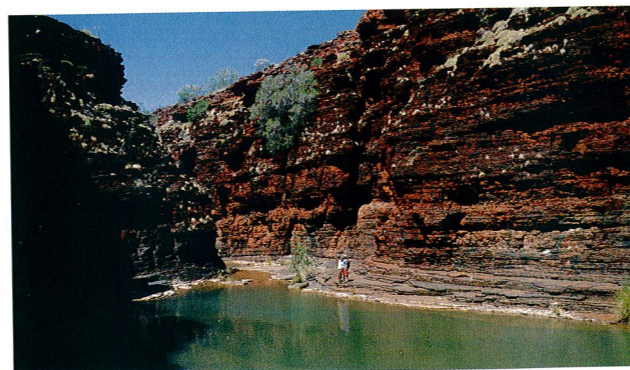
BE CAUTIOUS: Stay on roads and trails to protect the environment. Wet roads are slippery and easily damaged. Washouts can occur during heavy rain, resulting in road closures. Check travel conditions with the Department of Environment and Conservation on (08) 9182 2000 or the Shire of Ashburton on (08) 9188 4444.

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

BE WISE: Do not contaminate pools with soap, detergents or sunscreen, as they kill aquatic life.

BE CAREFUL: Avoid the risk of wildfire. Use the gas barbecues provided, or your portable cooking appliance. Ground fires and solid fuel fires are not permitted.

BE CLEAN: Go to the toilet before entering the gorges. Carry a rubbish bag and leave nothing but your footprints.



Many toilets in national parks use a composting or biolytic system which are destroyed by the chemicals in black-water. Please use sullage points provided in the towns and some Main Roads Western Australia roadside stops.



**WARNING
BLUE ASBESTOS PRESENT
IN YAMPIRE GORGE**

Asbestos dust may cause cancer when inhaled.

MORE INFORMATION

National park rangers are always pleased 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 Visitor Centre

Telephone: (08) 9189 8121
Fax: (08) 9189 8113
Karijini National Park
PO Box 29
Tom Price WA 6751
Telephone: (08) 9189 8147
Fax: (08) 9189 8104

Pilbara Regional Office

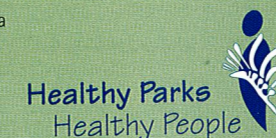
Department of Environment and Conservation
Mardie Road
Karratha Industrial Estate
PO Box 835
Karratha WA 6714
Telephone: (08) 9182 2000
Fax: (08) 9144 1118

State Operational Headquarters

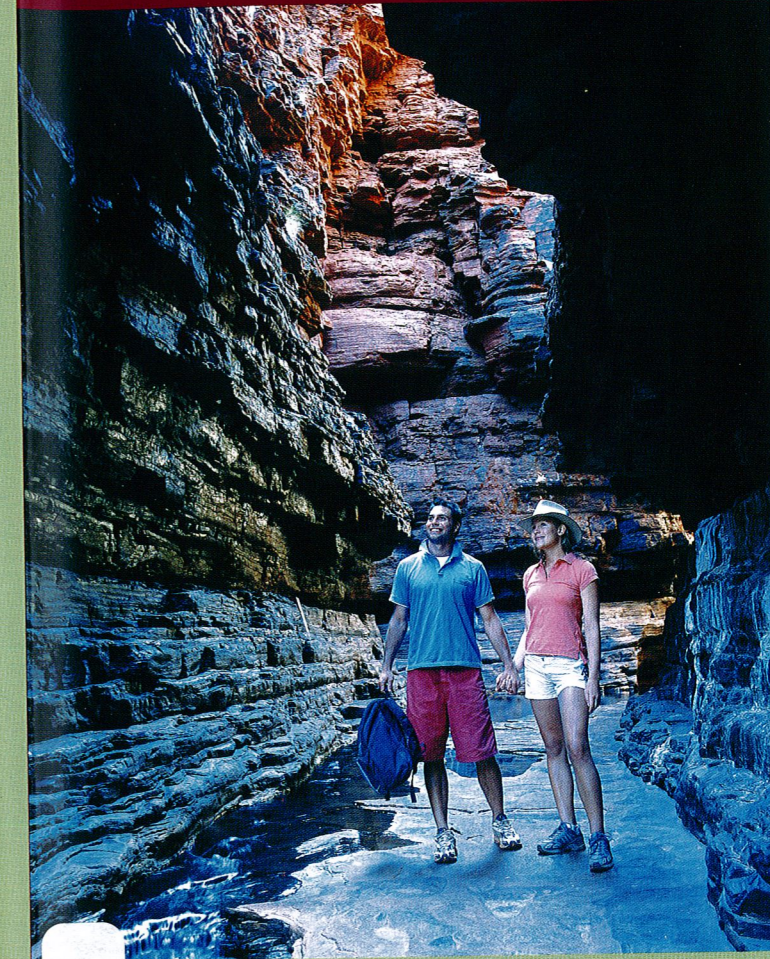
Department of Environment and Conservation
17 Dick Perry Avenue
Kensington WA 6151
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
Bentley WA 6983
Telephone: (08) 9334 0333

www.dec.wa.gov.au

Photos - DEC and Tourism Western Australia



Karijini National Park



PAM02662

Information and walk trail guide



Department of
Environment and Conservation
Our environment, our future



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2009226-05-30M



Traditional owners

The Banyjima, Yinhawangka and Kurrama Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, call the Hamersley Range Karijini. The name 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 30,000 years. During 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 range of plants and animals found in the park today.

Fern Pool and Circular Pool are special places to local Aboriginal people. To protect the heritage and cultural and environmental values of these areas, we ask that visitors enter the water quietly and avoid making loud noises. Access to the area above Fern Pool is not permitted so please do not climb or jump from the waterfall (or the ledges surrounding Circular Pool). Relax quietly 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 250–350 millimetres is often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones producing spectacular water flows in the gorges. During summer, temperatures frequently top 40 degrees Celsius, ideal conditions for swimming in the gorge pools. 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 more than 2,500 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 sculptured the rocks into the present landscape.

The gorges

In the north of the park, small creekbeds, hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year, suddenly plunge down 100-metre chasms. Farther downstream the gorges become wider and their sides change from sheer cliff 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 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 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 (kangaroos that are common to the rocky country), Rothschild's rock-wallabies, bats and dingoes.

Many species of native rodents and native marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara ninguai 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.

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

Facilities

Visitor Centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre is located just off Banjima Drive. It is open from 9am to 4pm from April to October and 10am to 2pm from November to March.

Camping

Only camp at those sites indicated on the map. Caravan, bus, and generator sites are available at Dales Campground and Karijini Eco Retreat. Facilities include bush toilets, gas barbecues and picnic tables.

Dingoes are common around the Dales campground. They have learnt to scavenge for food and can become aggressive. Never feed dingoes, supervise your children at all times, walk in groups and store your food and iceboxes in your vehicle.

Please take your rubbish with you and turn generators off between 9pm and 7am.

Telephones

Public telephones are located at Karijini Eco Retreat and the Karijini Visitor Centre. Mobile phones do not work in Karijini National Park and satellite phones do not work in the gorges. There is an emergency radio located at Weano Day Use area.

Water

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

Lookouts

Please stay behind the barriers. Never throw rocks into the gorges, as people may be walking below.

Walking

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

- Stay on established trails and stand well back from cliff edges. Cliffs are about 100 metres high, often with loose rocks near the edge.
- If hiking overnight, let a responsible person know.
- Take care in the gorges. Rocks are smooth and slippery, particularly when wet.

WARNING! Flash floods can occur. Do not enter the gorges if there is rain in the area. If you are already in the gorges, leave as quickly as you can.

BE PREPARED: Wear sturdy walking shoes, and take plenty of water.

Swimming

Gorge pools can be deep, shaded and very cold, while others, exposed to the sun, may be pleasant places for a quick dip.

- The water is extremely cold, especially between April and September, and hypothermia can occur.
- Do not dive or jump into water.



WALK TRAIL GUIDE

BUSHWALKS IN THE PILBARA

For more detailed information on walks contact DEC's Pilbara office

TRAIL GRADES

Class 2

These walks are generally well marked with hardened surfaces, and may have steps. No experience is required. Users are expected to exercise normal care regarding personal safety.

Class 3

Users require a moderate level of fitness. Trails may be slightly modified and may include a combination of steps, hardened sections and unstable surfaces. Weather can affect safety.

Class 4

These distinct tracks are in relatively undisturbed natural environments. Trails are often rough with very little if any modifications. A moderate to high level of fitness is required and weather can affect safety.

Class 5

Mostly indistinct trails through undisturbed natural environments. Terrain is rough. High level of fitness is required. Users must be prepared and self-reliant, with advanced outdoor knowledge. Weather can affect safety. To access Karijini gorges beyond Class 5 you must have a nationally recognised accreditation to abseil and climb on natural surfaces.

MOUNT BRUCE (Punurrunha)

The second-tallest peak in WA lies about 36 kilometres west of the park office. Here is a great opportunity to view the Marandoo Mine Site.

Marandoo View 500 metres – 30 minutes return

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 4.6 kilometres – 3 hours return

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 9 kilometres – 6 hours return

Use the early morning hours to take the route that leads up the western face of the mountain, past Marandoo View. This challenging walk will reward you with spectacular views of the landscape.



DALES GORGE

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

Gorge Rim 2 kilometres – 1.5 hours return

Follow the rim of the gorge between Circular Pool Lookout and the beginning of the Fortescue Falls Track. White-barked snappy gums grow in the car park around the edge of the gorge and shady groves of native cypress shelter on the cliff face beneath the track. Enjoy the wonderful views into Dales Gorge.

Fortescue Falls 800 metres – 1 hour return

Reached by following a trail from the car park, walkers negotiate steps and a narrow trail to the waterfall. Have a refreshing swim in the spring-fed permanent falls.

Fern Pool

Optional 300-metre detour from Fortescue Falls.

Circular Pool 800 metres – 2 hours return

Follow the path from the car park, descending the steps down a steep slope to the bottom of the gorge. Ramble along the gorge floor to the fern-framed pool. Take a dip before retracing your steps.

Dales Gorge 2 kilometres – 3 hours return

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



JOFFRE AND KNOX GORGES

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 100 metres – 10 minutes return

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

Knox Lookout 300 metres – 15 minutes return

As you take the steps down to the lookout, watch the view spread out in the distance. It's spectacular in the early morning or late afternoon light.

Knox Gorge 2 kilometres – 3 hours return

As you climb down and scramble along the gorge, notice the fig trees clinging to the richly coloured walls. Skirt several pools and return from the 'Gorge Risk Area' sign.

Joffre Falls 3 kilometres – 2 hours return

Follow the marked route into the bottom of the gorge to the first pool downstream of the waterfall.

HANCOCK AND WEANO GORGES

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

Oxer and Junction Pool Lookouts 800 metres – 30 minutes return

From the Weano Recreational Area follow the trail to Junction Pool Lookout for breathtaking views into Hancock Gorge, 100 metres below you. If continuing to Oxer Lookout, please see below.

Oxer Lookout

From Junction Pool Lookout to Oxer Lookout the trail is narrow with loose rocks in patches. Please take great care.

Handrail Pool 1 kilometre – 1.5 hours return

From the Weano car park, follow the trail to the edge of the Weano Gorge, then down the steps to the bottom. Here, high walls of rock will tower above you.

Please note: As the gorge narrows, the trail changes to a Class 5. Take care as you negotiate the slippery rocks on your climb down into the chilly waters of Handrail Pool.

Hancock Gorge 135 metres – 10 minutes return

From the car park to the top of the ladder in Hancock Gorge. Turn back now if you don't want to negotiate the ladder.

Hancock Gorge 200 metres – 45 minutes return

This leads from the top of the ladder down to 'Kermit's Pool'.

Handrail Pool

Access includes two grades of trail – Class 3 and Class 5. (See description under Class 3 Handrail Pool).

KALAMINA GORGE

This is a great introduction to the gorge system with its delightful trail and picnicking area.

HAMERSLEY GORGE

This gorge has dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

Kalamina Gorge 3 kilometres – 3 hours return

Descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream, or stroll quietly beside the stream, covered with lemon-scented grass; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool.

Hamersley Waterfall 400 metres – 1 hour return

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

Hamersley Gorge 1 kilometre – 3 hours return

Follow this route upstream past still pools and polished boulders to 'The Grotto' – a fern-lined chasm, well hidden in the eastern side of the gorge.



