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# SILENT GROVE AND BELL GORGE PROPOSED KING LEOPOLD NATIONAL PARK

## AN ANCIENT LANDSCAPE

The King Leopold Ranges extend for some 300 kilometres from Walcott Inlet, in the west to about 100 kilometres from Hall's Creek in the east. The ranges consist of long, rugged, spinifex-covered ridges and escarpments. Mount Ord at 947 metres above sea level and Mount Broome at 935 metres are the highest peaks in the range.

The most abundant of the tilted strata are white and pink quartz sandstone, buff siltstone and brown mudstone. There are also layers of grey-green basalt that solidified from lava flows, and grey dolerite formed from molten rock which invaded the older sedimentary rock to form layers.

This sequence of rocks formed in a region known as the Kimberley Basin, which is, in places 5,000 metres thick. It was deposited in shallow water on a slowly subsiding large continental mass in Precambrian times, about 1,800 million years ago.

About 560 million years ago the generally flat-lying layers were thrust from the north-east over older granite, volcanic and metamorphosed sedimentary rocks of the Hooper Complex. This caused the rocks on the leading edge to crumple in a major mountain building exercise. Subsequent erosion formed the King Leopold Ranges of today

Following wet season rains, great volumes of water cascading from the range drain to the west through a series of creek systems such as the Lennard River and Bell Creek. This water ultimately flows into the sea at King Sound and Walcott Inlet.

## RECENT HISTORY

In 1879 Alexander Forrest's survey party travelling from the De Grey River to Port Darwin named the Ranges "after King Leopold of Belgium, in recognition of the great interest taken by His Majesty in exploration". However they were unable to find a way through the rugged ranges.

In 1898 the explorer and stockman Frank Hann managed to cross the ranges via the pass which bears his name.

Hann named Bell Creek "after Mr. Bell of Derby".

The Mount Hart pastoral lease, which encompasses Bell Gorge and Silent Grove, was first taken up around 1919. Since then there have been a succession of pastoralists who went broke and walked off the lease because the land was too rugged and unsuitable for pasture.

In 1992 the Department of Conservation and Land Management acquired the land to create the proposed King Leopold National Park. The park, which covers over 392,000 hectares, is situated approximately 200 kilometres from Derby and 450 kilometres from Kununurra via the Gibb River Road.



# SILENT GROVE & BELL GORGE

## PROPOSED KING LEOPOLD NATIONAL PARK

### CAMPING AREAS

There are two camping areas in the proposed King Leopold National Park. The primary campground at Silent Grove takes its name from the old station homestead.

There are also ten individual designated campsites along Bell Creek. These campsites operate on a tag system. That is, if you have a tag you may camp at Bell Creek.

**If no tags are available then you must camp at Silent Grove.**

The Silent Grove Campground has showers, flushing toilets and drinking water can be obtained from the taps in the grounds. Firewood for cooking is supplied by the rangers. Fires may only be lit in the fire rings provided.

The National Park Rangers collect camping fees in the late afternoon and evening.

Generators can only be used at Silent Grove. **Generators may not be used in the Bell Creek campsites.**

Bell Creek campsites have flushing toilets servicing two campsites and, once again, firewood is provided by the rangers.

**Bell Creek is a fragile ecosystem so please do not use soap or detergents in the water.**

### BELL GORGE

Water flowing west from the King Leopold Range has cut down through the ancient rock to form spectacular gorges such as Bell and Lennard Gorges. Bell Gorge, about 300 metres above sea level is the beginning of a series of waterfalls which descend through the Isdell Range to Walcott Inlet.

Bell Gorge is a spectacular spot for swimming, photography and enjoying what nature has to offer. The falls are reached by a one kilometre walk from the car park. Once you have come to the top of the waterfall you may wish to swim or relax in the top pool or cross, further up the creek, to the opposite side. From there it is a reasonable walk over the top of the hill and through the spinifex to the bottom pool. Here is an excellent swimming hole and a magnificent view of the waterfall and the gorge to the west.

### CLIFF RISK AREA

As there are very high walls surrounding the gorge **extreme care** should be taken near the edge. Suitable footwear is recommended, as the water-washed rocks can be wet and slippery. Please exercise care when negotiating the paths and creek crossings.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, BOX 65, BROOME, W.A., 6725

## SILENT GROVE & BELL GORGE BIRD LIST

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
<b>Brown Quail</b>	<i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>	<b>Spotted Harrier</b>	<i>Circus assimilis</i>
<b>Wandering Whistling Duck</b>	<i>Dendrocygna arcuata</i>	<b>Swamp Harrier</b>	<i>Circus approximans</i>
<b>Plumed Whistling Duck</b>	<i>Dendrocygna eytoni</i>	<b>Brown Falcon</b>	<i>Falco berigora</i>
<b>Pacific Black Duck</b>	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	<b>Nankeen Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco cenchroides</i>
<b>Grey Teal</b>	<i>Anas gracilis</i>	<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
<b>Australasian Grebe</b>	<i>Tachybaptus novaehollandiae</i>	<b>Australian Hobby</b>	<i>Falco longipennis</i>
<b>Little Black Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	<b>Grey Falcon</b>	<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>
<b>Little Pied Cormorant</b>	<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos</i>	<b>Brolga</b>	<i>Grus rubicundus</i>
<b>Black-necked Stork</b>	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	<b>Buff-banded Rail</b>	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>
<b>White-necked Heron</b>	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>	<b>Australian Spotted Crane</b>	<i>Porzana fluminea</i>
<b>White-faced Heron</b>	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	<b>Black-tailed Native-hen</b>	<i>Gallinula ventralis</i>
<b>Cattle Egret</b>	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	<b>Australian Bustard</b>	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>
<b>Little Egret</b>	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	<b>Bush Stone-curlew</b>	<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>
<b>Great Egret</b>	<i>Ardea alba</i>	<b>Little Button-quail</b>	<i>Turnix velox</i>
<b>Intermediate Egret</b>	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	<b>Red-backed Button-quail</b>	<i>Turnix maculosa</i>
<b>Nankeen Night Heron</b>	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	<b>Common Greenshank</b>	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
<b>Black Bittern</b>	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>	<b>Common Sandpiper</b>	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
<b>Straw-necked Ibis</b>	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	<b>Oriental Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius veredus</i>
<b>Australian White Ibis</b>	<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>	<b>Black-fronted Dotterel</b>	<i>Elseyaornis melanops</i>
<b>Royal Spoonbill</b>	<i>Platalea regia</i>	<b>Masked Lapwing</b>	<i>Vanellus miles</i>
<b>Black-shouldered Kite</b>	<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	<b>Diamond Dove</b>	<i>Geopelia cuneata</i>
<b>Pacific Baza</b>	<i>Aviceda suberistata</i>	<b>Peaceful Dove</b>	<i>Geopelia striata</i>
<b>Black Kite</b>	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	<b>Bar-shouldered Dove</b>	<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>
<b>Whistling Kite</b>	<i>Haliastur sphenurus</i>	<b>Common Bronzewing</b>	<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>
<b>Square-tailed Kite</b>	<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	<b>Crested Pigeon</b>	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>
<b>Black-breasted Buzzard</b>	<i>Hamirostra melanosternon</i>	<b>Spinifex Pigeon</b>	<i>Geophaps plumifera</i>
<b>Red Goshawk</b>	<i>Erythrorhynchus radiatus</i>	<b>White-quilled Rock-pigeon</b>	<i>Petrophassa albipennis</i>
<b>Collared Sparrowhawk</b>	<i>Accipiter cirrhocephalus</i>	<b>Pied Imperial-pigeon</b>	<i>Ducula bicolor</i>
<b>Brown Goshawk</b>	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	<b>Red-tailed Black-cockatoo</b>	<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii</i>
<b>Osprey</b>	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	<b>Galah</b>	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>
<b>White-bellied Sea-eagle</b>	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	<b>Little Corella</b>	<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>
<b>Little Eagle</b>	<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	<b>Sulphur-crested Cockatoo</b>	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>
<b>Wedge-tailed Eagle</b>	<i>Aquila audax</i>	<b>Red-collared Lorikeet</b>	<i>Trichoglossus rubritorquis</i>
<b>Varied Lorikeet</b>	<i>Psitteuteles versicolor</i>	<b>White-gaped Honeyeater</b>	<i>Lichenostomus unicolor</i>
<b>Red-winged Parrot</b>	<i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i>	<b>Singing Honeyeater</b>	<i>Lichenostomus virescens</i>
<b>Cockatiel</b>	<i>Nymphicus hollandicus</i>	<b>Grey-fronted Honeyeater</b>	<i>Lichenostomus plumulus</i>
<b>Northern Rosella</b>	<i>Platycercus venustus</i>	<b>Yellow-tinted Honeyeater</b>	<i>Lichenostomus flavescens</i>
<b>Budgerigar</b>	<i>Melopsittacus undulatus</i>	<b>Black-chinned Honeyeater</b>	<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>
<b>Pallid Cuckoo</b>	<i>Cuculus pallidus</i>	<b>White-throated Honeyeater</b>	<i>Melithreptus albogularis</i>

<b>Brush Cuckoo</b>	<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	<b>Bar-breasted Honeyeater</b>	<i>Ramsayornis fasciatus</i>
<b>Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo</b>	<i>Chrysococcyx basalis</i>	<b>Rufous-throated Honeyeater</b>	<i>Conopophila rufogularis</i>
<b>Common Koel</b>	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	<b>Banded Honeyeater</b>	<i>Certhionyx pectoralis</i>
<b>Channel-billed Cuckoo</b>	<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	<b>Brown Honeyeater</b>	<i>Lichmera indistincta</i>
<b>Pheasant Coucal</b>	<i>Centropus phasianinus</i>	<b>Crimson Chat</b>	<i>Epthianura tricolor</i>
<b>Barking Owl</b>	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	<b>Yellow Chat</b>	<i>Epthianura crocea</i>
<b>Southern Boobook</b>	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	<b>Jacky Winter</b>	<i>Microeca fascians</i>
<b>Barn Owl</b>	<i>Tyto alba</i>	<b>Hooded Robin</b>	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>
<b>Tawny Frogmouth</b>	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	<b>Grey-crowned Babbler</b>	<i>Pomastostomus temporalis</i>
<b>Spotted Nightjar</b>	<i>Eurstopodus argus</i>	<b>Varied Sittella</b>	<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>
<b>Fork-tailed Swift</b>	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	<b>Rufous Whistler</b>	<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>
<b>Azure Kingfisher</b>	<i>Alcedo azurea</i>	<b>Grey Shrike-thrush</b>	<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>
<b>Blue-winged Kookaburra</b>	<i>Dacelo leachii</i>	<b>Little Shrike-thrush</b>	<i>Colluricincla megarhyncha</i>
<b>Sacred Kingfisher</b>	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	<b>Sandstone Shrike-thrush</b>	<i>Colluricincla woodwardi</i>
<b>Red-backed Kingfisher</b>	<i>Todiramphus pyrrhopygia</i>	<b>Leaden Flycatcher</b>	<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>
<b>Rainbow Bee-eater</b>	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	<b>Restless Flycatcher</b>	<i>Myiagra inquieta</i>
<b>Dollarbird</b>	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	<b>Willie Wagtail</b>	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
<b>Black-tailed Treecreeper</b>	<i>Climacteris melanura</i>	<b>Northern Fantail</b>	<i>Rhipidura rufiventris</i>
<b>Variegated Fairy-wren</b>	<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	<b>Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike</b>	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
<b>Purple-crowned Fairy-wren</b>	<i>Malurus coronatus</i>	<b>White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike</b>	<i>Coracina papuensis</i>
<b>Red-backed Fairy-wren</b>	<i>Malurus melanocephalus</i>	<b>Ground Cuckoo-shrike</b>	<i>Coracina maxima</i>
<b>Red-browed Pardalote</b>	<i>Pardalotus rubricatus</i>	<b>White-winged Triller</b>	<i>Lalage sueurii</i>
<b>Striated Pardalote</b>	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	<b>Varied Triller</b>	<i>Lalage leucomela</i>
<b>Green-backed Gerygone</b>	<i>Gerygone chloronatus</i>	<b>Olive-backed Oriole</b>	<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>
<b>White-throated Gerygone</b>	<i>Gerygone olivacea</i>	<b>Yellow Oriole</b>	<i>Oriolus flavocinctus</i>
<b>Weebill</b>	<i>Smicronis brevirostris</i>	<b>Figbird</b>	<i>Sphecotheres viridis</i>
<b>Little Friarbird</b>	<i>Philemon citreogularis</i>	<b>White-breasted Woodswallow</b>	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>
<b>Silver-crowned Friarbird</b>	<i>Philemon argenticeps</i>	<b>White-browed Woodswallow</b>	<i>Artamus superciliosus</i>
<b>Yellow-throated Miner</b>	<i>Manorina flavigula</i>	<b>Black-faced Woodswallow</b>	<i>Artamus cinereus</i>
<b>Little Woodswallow</b>	<i>Artamus minor</i>	<b>Star Finch</b>	<i>Neochmia ruficauda</i>
<b>Grey Butcherbird</b>	<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	<b>Zebra Finch</b>	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>
<b>Pied Butcherbird</b>	<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	<b>Pictorella Mannikin</b>	<i>Heteromunia pectoralis</i>
<b>Magpie Lark</b>	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	<b>Gouldian Finch</b>	<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>
<b>Australian Magpie</b>	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	<b>Mistletoebird</b>	<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>
<b>Torresian Crow</b>	<i>Corvus orru</i>	<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
<b>Blue-faced Honeyeater</b>	<i>Entomyzon cyanotis</i>	<b>Masked Woodswallow</b>	<i>Artamus personatus</i>
<b>Great Bowerbird</b>	<i>Chlamydera nuchalis</i>	<b>Tree Martin</b>	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>
<b>Richard's Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	<b>Fairy Martin</b>	<i>Hirundo ariel</i>
<b>Singing Bushlark</b>	<i>Mirafra javanica</i>	<b>Clamorous Reed-warbler</b>	<i>Arcephalus stentoreus</i>
<b>Yellow Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	<b>Tawny Grassbird</b>	<i>Megalurus timoriensis</i>
<b>Double-barred Finch</b>	<i>Taeniopygia bichenovii</i>	<b>Rufous Songlark</b>	<i>Cinclorhamphus mathewsi</i>
<b>Masked Finch</b>	<i>Poephila personata</i>	<b>Golden-headed Cisticola</b>	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>
<b>Long-tailed Finch</b>	<i>Poephila acuticauda</i>		

# FAUNA OF SILENT GROVE & BELL CREEK AREA

Limited biological surveys have been done of the proposed King Leopold National Park, but it is known that the fauna is diverse.

## MAMMALS

Mammals which may be seen are the echidna, sugar gliders, northern quolls, the northern brown bandicoot, and the little known rock ringtail possum. Unlike its tree dwelling relatives, it lives exclusively in rocky outcrops sleeping during the day venturing forth at night to feed on blossoms and fruit.

Macropods found in the ranges include the antilopine wallaroo, the euro, short-eared rock wallabies and agile and northern nail-tail wallabies.

Small nocturnal animals include the stripe-faced dunnart, the long-tailed planigale, Forrest's mouse and the delicate mouse.

As well as the dusky leafnosed-bat and the common bent-wing bat, the little known yellow-lipped bat has been found in the wetter areas of the ranges.

## REPTILES

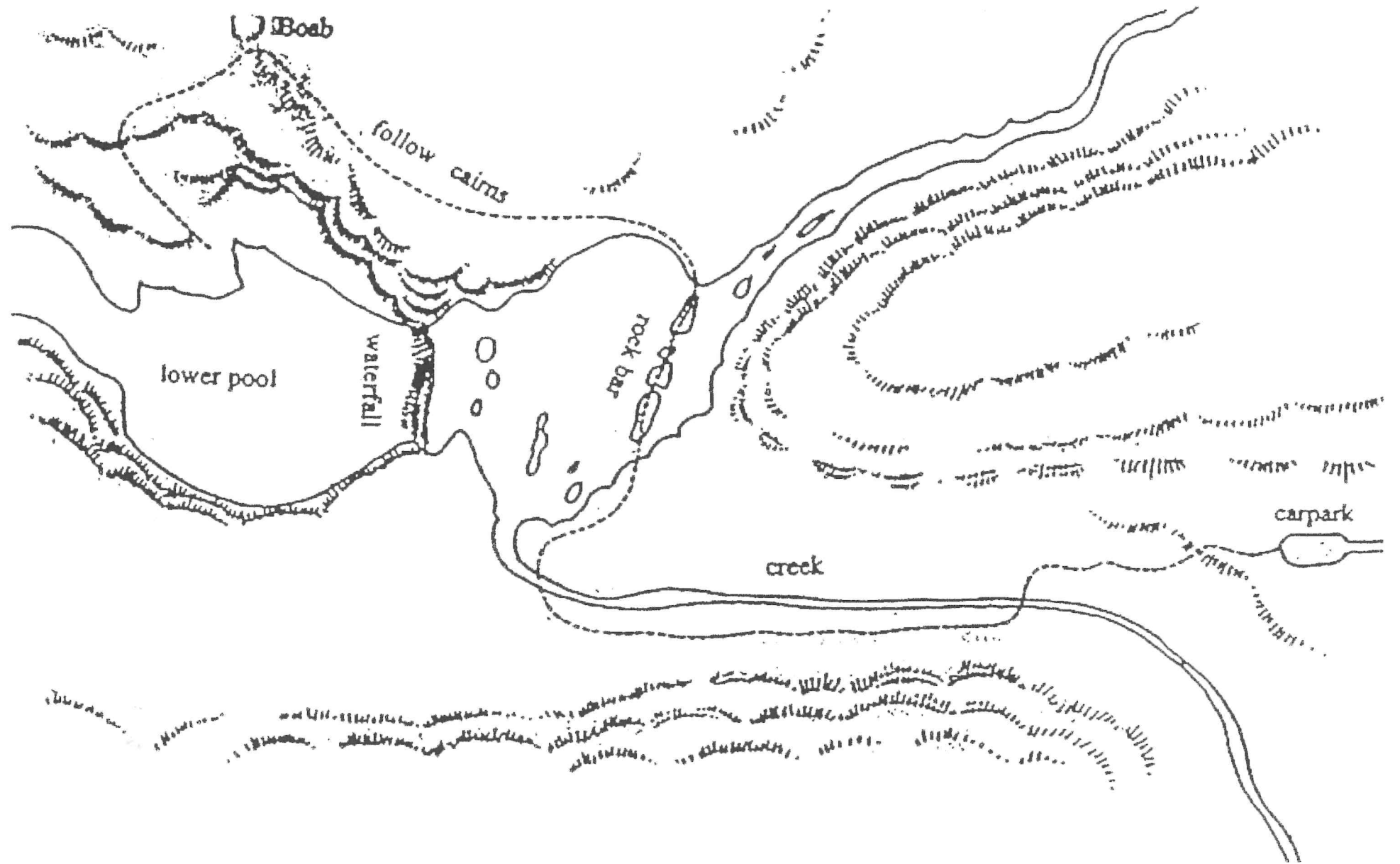
Reptiles are common. Freshwater crocodiles and the abundant northern long-necked turtles live in the creeks within the park. Merten's water monitors are often seen swimming and basking in and around Bell Gorge. Numerous Dragon lizards, Blue-tongue lizards, geckoes and Sand Monitors are all part of this rich area.

Various species of snakes are found in the region. These include Stimson's, Water, Olive and Black-headed Pythons. Snakes of the *Elapidae* family, that is front-fanged snakes, include the Mulga, Western Brown snakes and the Black whip snake, reputed to be the fastest species of snake in Australia!

**Remember snakes are a vital part of the ecosystem and if you leave them alone they will leave you alone.**

Numerous species of frogs can be seen, and heard, along the watercourses at night. The campground toilets are a favourite haunt of the Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*. Rocket frogs *Litoria nasuta* inhabit the edges of the streams and the rock overhangs at Bell Gorge.

**The National Park Rangers on behalf of the Department of Conservation hope you have enjoyed your stay.**



# COMMON PLANTS OF SILENT GROVE & BELL CREEK

The Silent Grove campground and Bell Creek have riverine plant systems which support a wide range of plants. Some of the most common plants are listed below.

## **ADANSONIA GREGORII**

The Boab Tree is easily identified by its size and tremendous girth. Boabs have a smooth grey trunk which increases with age. The trees are deciduous for a large part of the year. During the late dry season the trees produce glossy green leaves and flower in November / December. The large creamy flowers are pollinated by the nocturnal Hawkmoth.

## **BUCHANANIA OBOVATA**

The Green Plum, or Wild Cashew, as it is also known, is a small attractive tree with a rough trunk and dark green leaves. The edible green plum-like fruit is produced in the late dry season.

## **CALYTRIX EXSTIPULATA**

Turkey bush takes on a somewhat gnarled appearance as it ages. However this does not detract from the abundance of attractive pink star-like flowers in August through to October.

## **CASSIA FISTULA**

Golden Shower is a native of India. The plant was a favourite of early Kimberley residents because of its large tassels of beautiful bright yellow flowers in September / October each year. Today this tree reminds us that the Silent Grove Campground was once part of a homestead garden.

## **EUCALYPTUS MINIATA**

The large tree with the rough fibrous bark on the trunk and smooth white branches is the Woollybutt. These trees have small orange blossoms from May through August, which are eagerly sought by nectar eating lorikeets and parrots.

## **EUCALYPTUS PTCHOCARPA**

Swamp bloodwood is a moderate sized tree with a rough straight trunk and very large leaves. The large creamy flowers are popular with Red-collared Lorikeets who lick the abundant nectar and with Little Corellas who crack open the seedpods to get the seeds.

## **LYGODIUM SP.**

This attractive Maidenhair Fern is found in moist habitats climbing on rocks and trees, usually in permanent moist areas. These ferns can be found along side the small stream behind the Silent Grove campground.



## **NYMPHAEA VIOLACEA**

These beautiful Water Lilies are common in freshwater lagoons, swamps billabongs and creek systems. The attractive purple flowers open in the sunlight and close in the evening. Small birds such as honeyeaters can often be seen landing on the large flat leaves and drinking from the surrounding water. Once again these plants can be seen in the stream behind the campground.

## **PANDANUS SPIRALIS**

The Screw Pine derives its name from the way the long strap-like leaves grow in a spiral form around the trunk. The leaves, however, have very sharp thorns along the margin, so be careful around these plants. From June to October large clusters of bright red fruit hang from the tree. The ripe fruit was roasted and eaten by Aboriginal people and the leaves were used to make baskets and matting.

## **PETALOSTIGMA PUBESCENS**

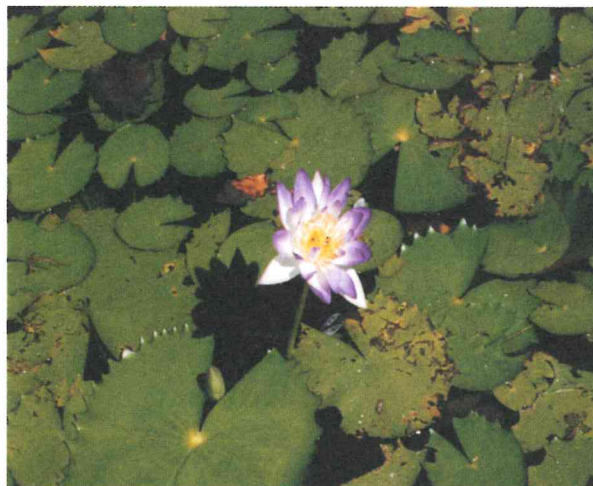
“What is the tree with the bright orange fruit?” is a question often asked of the rangers. The answer is the Quinine Tree. A very hardy tree growing over a large area of the Kimberley. Its fruit was used by Aboriginal people in medicinal ways and the wood was used to make spear throwers and as firewood. The fruit, however, is not edible.

## **PLANCHONIA CAREYA**

Cocky Apples, as the name suggests are very much sought after by corellas and other parrots when in fruit. Honeyeaters feast on the showy white flowers and parrots on the large fleshy fruit in July through to late October.

## **SESBANIA FORMOSA**

Sesbania formosa is also known as the White Cork Bark and grows along the banks of streams and associated moist areas. Sesbanias are a slender tree growing to 10 metres in height. They have masses of large white flowers in May and June followed by long seedpods. The flowers can be eaten raw or cooked.



*Nymphaea violacea*