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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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# Millstream Chichester National Park



Snappy gums

## More information

National park rangers are always glad to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. They regularly visit camping and day-use areas so please have a chat with them.

### Millstream Chichester National Park

PO Box 835, Karratha WA 6714  
Phone: (08) 9184 5144  
Fax: (08) 9184 5146

### Pilbara Regional Office

Department of Parks and Wildlife  
Cnr Anderson and Lambert Road, Karratha Industrial Estate  
PO Box 835, Karratha WA 6714  
Phone: (08) 9182 2000  
Fax: (08) 9144 1118

### State Operational Headquarters

Department of Parks and Wildlife  
17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington WA 6151  
Phone: (08) 9334 0333

[dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://dpaw.wa.gov.au)



Jirndawurrunha  
Park Council



## Visitor guide



Department of  
Parks and Wildlife



Front cover Crossing Pool  
Photos - Parks and Wildlife and Tourism WA

Information current as at August 2016.  
This document is available in alternative formats on request.

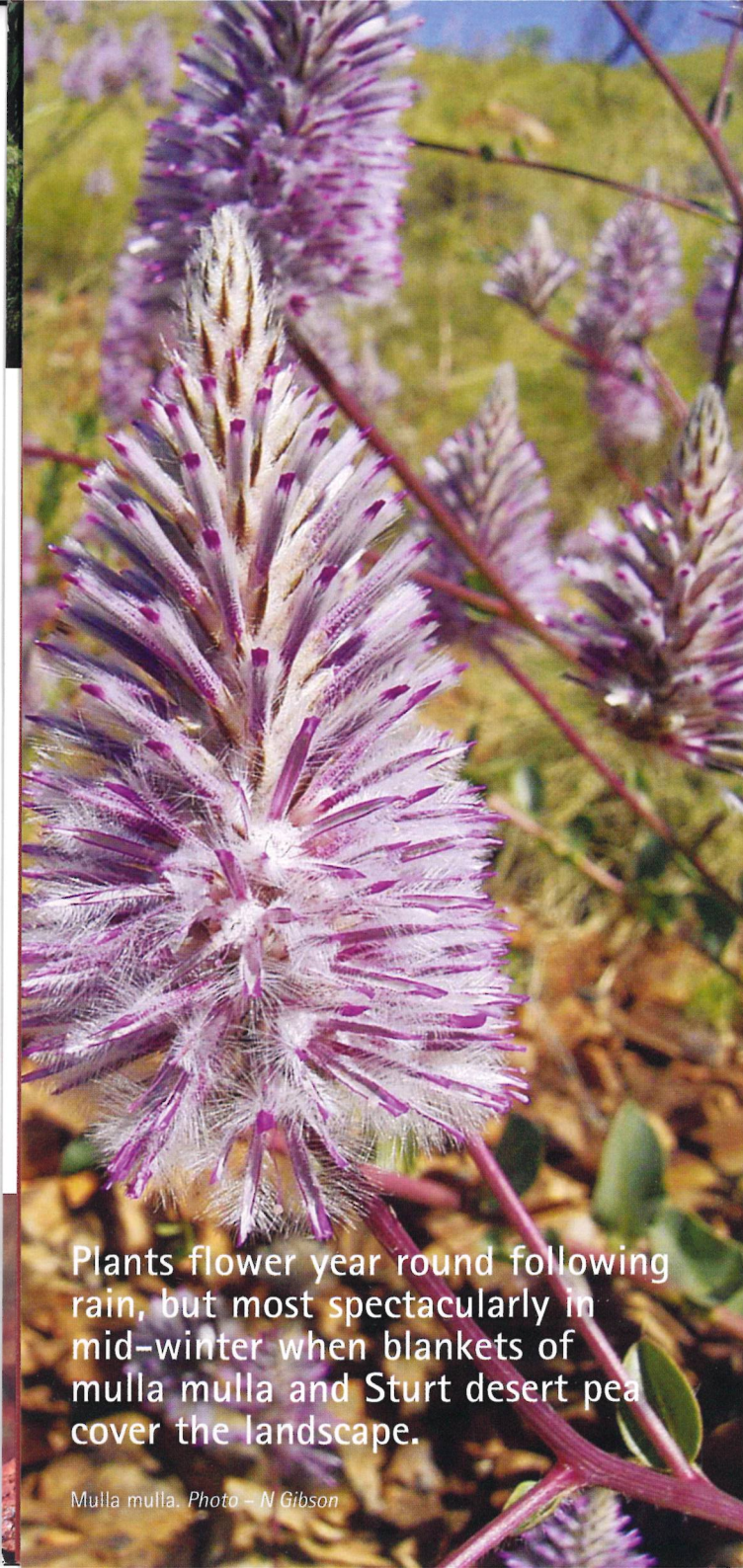


Department of  
Parks and Wildlife



PARKS  
PEOPLE

**RECYCLE** Please return unwanted brochures to distribution points



Plants flower year round following rain, but most spectacularly in mid-winter when blankets of mulla mulla and Sturt desert pea cover the landscape.

Mulla mulla. Photo – N Gibson



Dragonfly

## Care for the park and follow the seven Leave No Trace principles.



### 1. Plan ahead and prepare

There is no fuel at Millstream and the public telephone only accepts pre-paid phone cards. Roads may be closed after heavy rain. Check travel conditions with the department's Karratha office on (08) 9182 2000 or the Shire of Ashburton on (08) 9189 1029. The ranger's office can be contacted on (08) 9184 5144.

### 2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces

Follow the signs in the park. Stay on the roads and trails marked on the park maps. Camp only in designated campgrounds. Spinifex is fragile; it is easily damaged by indiscriminate driving, parking and walking, and can take many years to re-grow.

### 3. Dispose of waste properly

Please take your litter with you. The toilets at Millstream use composting or biolytic systems, which can be destroyed by chemicals in blackwater from portable toilets. As such, do not empty portable toilets into park toilets. Use sullage points provided in the towns and Main Roads roadside stops.

### 4. Leave what you find

Leave the natural environment as you find it. Several weeds threaten the park; please brush seeds from clothing and equipment before moving on.

### 5. Minimise campfire impacts

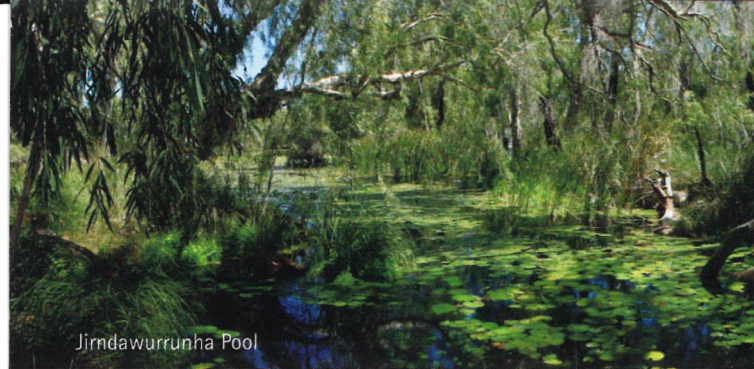
Ground fires and solid fuel fires are not permitted. Dead wood is part of an arid ecosystem, providing food and homes for wildlife.

### 6. Respect wildlife

Do not disturb animals, plants or rocks. Pets and firearms are not permitted. Please do not feed kangaroos or other wildlife, or approach them. Please do not use soap in streams and pools as it kills wildlife.

### 7. Be considerate

Many areas in the park are culturally significant to Aboriginal people. Please do not interfere with cultural sites. Do not swim in the waters around the homestead and please behave respectfully at Deep Reach Pool. The Warlu is considered to be sensitive to loud noise and poor conduct.



Jimdawurrinha Pool



Wickham's grevillea (*Grevillea wickhamii*)



Poison morning glory (*Ipomoea muelleri*)

## Millstream Chichester National Park

Most of the 240,000ha Millstream Chichester National Park is a landscape of rolling spinifex hills, spectacular escarpments and winding tree-lined watercourses. In contrast, there is the lush oasis of the Millstream wetlands and Fortescue River pools.

The arid-land plants and animals respond dramatically to infrequent rainfall events while the wetlands support a diversity of plant, bird and insect species. Many of these are endemic and rely on the permanent water source at Millstream.

The area has a long and dynamic cultural history. It forms part of the Yindjibarndi homeland and was an active pastoral station for more than 100 years. It is now recognised as a national park with significant natural, recreational and cultural values. The Millstream precinct is also a priority one water catchment area.

When you visit the park, call into the Millstream Homestead Visitor Centre to obtain information on the park's many features, or stroll along one of the interpretive walk trails.

The park is situated in a remote area and travel on dirt roads is necessary to access the park. Road conditions change frequently especially in summer with rain. In the cooler months, the park is generally accessible by 2WD vehicles but it is best to contact the park office or the department's Karratha office beforehand.

## The way of water

The water that feeds the Millstream oasis springs from an aquifer, or natural underground reserve, contained in the porous dolomite rock. This aquifer is fed by the Fortescue River (Yarnda Nyirranha) catchment, which includes run-off from the Hamersley Range. The aquifer has an estimated area of 2000km<sup>2</sup> and is believed to contain 1700 million cubic metres of water.

The Millstream area is a priority one catchment and, used in tandem with the Harding Dam, the aquifer supplies water to industry and for domestic use to the people of Wickham, Roebourne, Point Samson, Dampier and Karratha. The water level is constantly monitored and, in times of low water, pumps can be used to keep the Millstream pool topped up and flowing – an essential safeguard for the long-term survival of the wetland and its dependent wildlife.

## Wildlife

Wildlife is abundant in areas of the park close to water. Rock holes, riparian zones and river pools support a thriving ecosystem. On the plains, many species of animal adapted to aridity can be frequently seen, and the transition zone between moist and dry environments is particularly diverse. Plants flower year round following rain, but most spectacularly in mid-winter (June to August) when blankets of mulla mulla and Sturt desert pea cover the landscape. The brilliant yellow flowers of wattles and sennas provide a dramatic contrast to the hard red earth and chocolate brown rocks.

Plants more typical of the tropical north grow near permanent water pools; here forests of silver cadjeput and Millstream palms can be seen. The Millstream palm, with its fanned, grey-green leaves and smooth bark, is a relict from the deep past when rainforest covered the Pilbara in the paleoclimate. Introduced species such as date palms and cotton palms were once prolific at Millstream. They competed with native vegetation, blocked creek channels and encouraged wildfires. The majority have been removed and the areas replanted with native vegetation. Other weeds at Millstream include the Indian water fern, water lily and stinking passion vine.

Twenty-two species of dragonfly and damselfly have been recorded in the Millstream wetlands, and over 500 species of moths. Almost 100 reptile species call the park home and nearly 150 species of birds. Resident mammals include the endangered northern quoll, little red antechinus, kaluta and the euro.

Many of the bird species are delightfully coloured and can be seen during the cooler hours of the day, especially near water, and reptiles are prolific. Lizards are seen frequently on rocks and trees; even large species such as the Pilbara olive python and Gould's sand goanna make an appearance.

## The environment

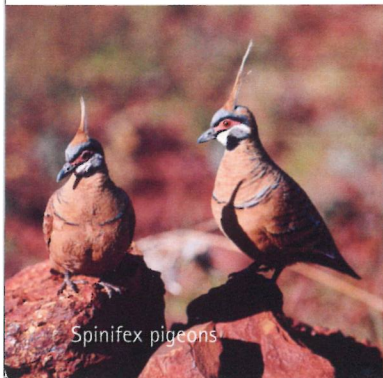
The Chichester Range rises sharply from the coastal plain and includes rocky peaks, tranquil gorges and hidden rock pools. Scattered white-barked gums and pincushion spinifex clumps cover the stony plateau, which gradually slopes down to the bed of the Fortescue River (Yarnda Nyirranha) before rising again to the vast bulk of the Hamersley Range.

Along the river lies the Millstream oasis with its string of deep spring-fed pools fringed by sedges, palm groves and paper-bark forest.

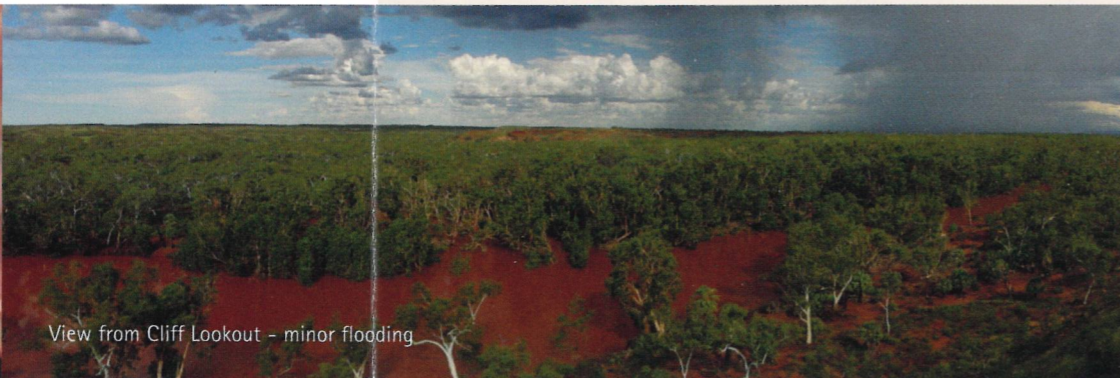
Wildfires caused by lightning strikes occur throughout summer, and controlled burning for biodiversity and asset protection is conducted regularly. Burnt areas recover quickly after rain and provide a variety of food and habitats for local wildlife.

## Climate

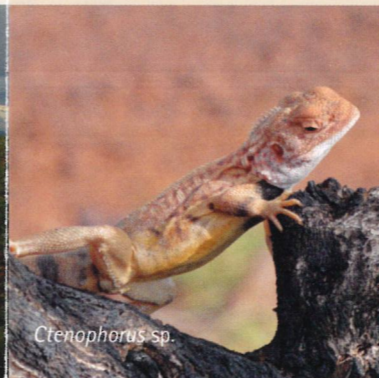
The Pilbara is located within the arid tropics. During the summer, between October and April, temperatures rise above 40°C and cyclones and local thunderstorms can flood roads and watercourses. The cool season, between May and August, experiences little rain, with daytime temperatures around 26°C. Nights at this time of year can be cool, so warm clothes may be necessary.



Spinifex pigeons



View from Cliff Lookout - minor flooding



Ctenophorus sp.



Millstream palms



Dingo



Sturt desert pea



Narrina Creek Gorge

## Things to see and do

### Millstream Homestead Visitor Centre

Start your visit by calling in to the Millstream Homestead Visitor Centre (not regularly manned), which features rooms dedicated to the Yindjibarndi people, the early settlers and the natural environment. Other displays provide information about the park's attractions and management challenges. Camp hosts are stationed in the campground during the tourist season (April to September), and can answer further questions, or direct you to the ranger.

### Telephones

The public telephone at the visitor centre can only be used with a phone card. Please purchase pre-paid phone cards before visiting the park. There is no mobile phone reception in the park.

### Camping

Camping is available at Miliyanha and Stargazers campgrounds. Miliyanha has a barbecue shelter, toilets and is generator-friendly. It has some shade in the mornings and afternoons. Stargazers is a more open site and generators are not permitted. A gas barbecue and toilets are provided. Both campgrounds are suitable for tent camping up to very large caravans and motorhomes, and can be accessed by 2WD vehicles in good weather.

Camping at George River Gorge has access for 4WDs only. Allow 3 hours to travel from Millstream Homestead to the gorge. Use caution when driving, as water levels are highly variable in the river pools and may pose a safety risk. Dogs and fires are not permitted in the camping area at any time.

### Picnicking

Gas barbecues are available in the day-use areas at the Millstream Homestead and Deep Reach Pool.



Homestead picnic area

## Safe walking tips

Millstream Chichester National Park offers a variety of walk and cycle trails that are classified according to the Australian Standards for walk trails. Please choose trails carefully. Select those that suit your level of ability and fitness.

Your safety is our concern, but your responsibility.



CLASS 1



CLASS 2



CLASS 3



CLASS 4



CLASS 5

When walking in the park wear a hat, broad spectrum sun screen and sturdy walking shoes. Carry adequate water. To avoid dehydration each person needs to drink plenty of water. Undertaking medium or long walks in summer is not recommended. For your own safety, please remain on existing trails.



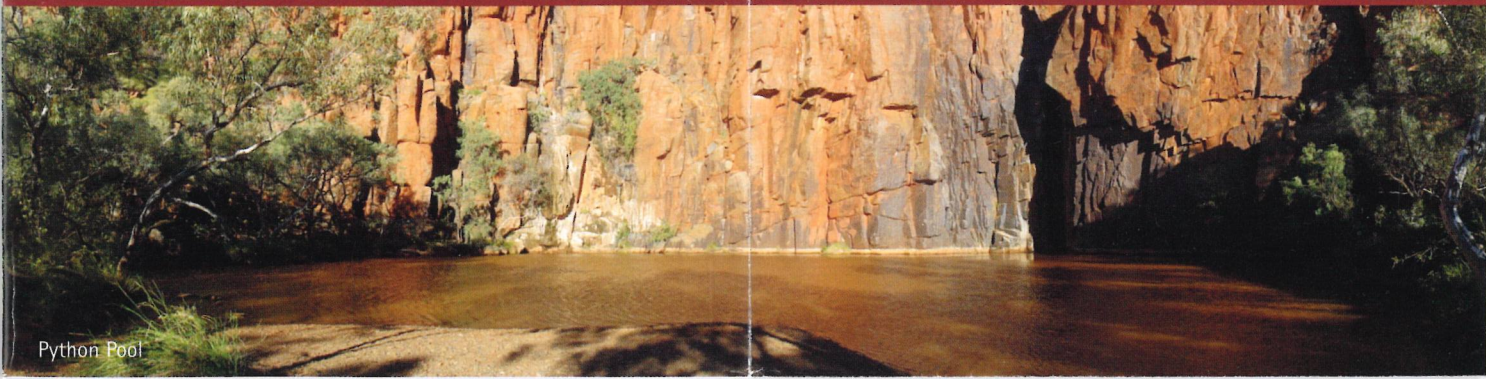
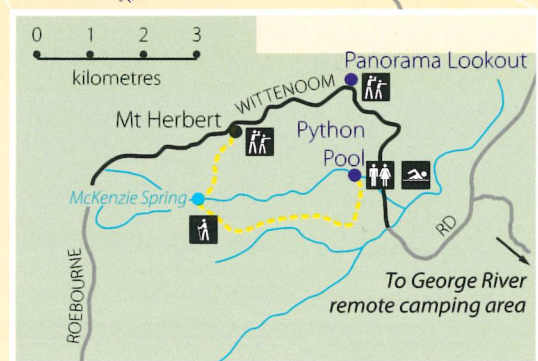
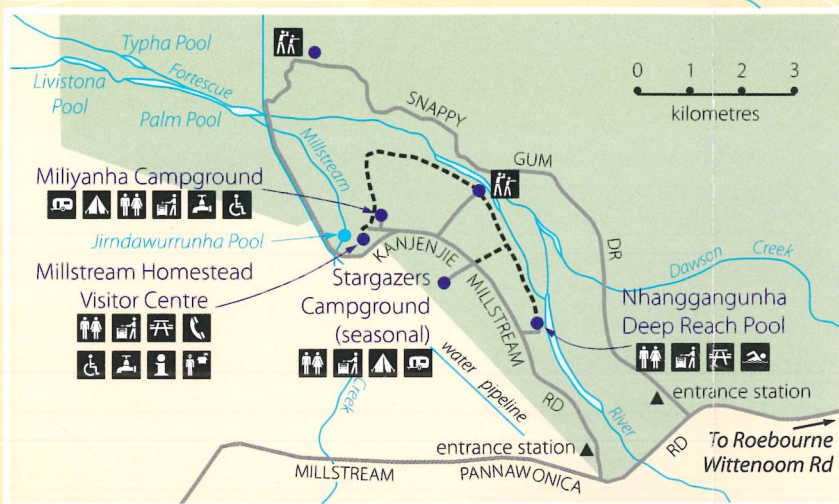
Jewelled gecko



Millstream Homestead

### Legend

- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Railway
- Chichester Range Camel Trail
- Walk and cycle trails
- National park
- Bushwalking trail
- Camping (bush)
- Caravan park
- Drinking water
- Gas barbecue
- Information
- Picnic area
- Ranger station
- Swimming
- Telephone (card only)
- Toilets
- Vistas
- Universal access



Python Pool

## Fees

Park entrance fees and camping fees apply. Please pay entrance fees at the self-registration park entry stations. Alternatively you can purchase a park pass from the department's office in Karratha, or one of the Pilbara visitor centres. Please display entry permits on the dashboard of your vehicle.

## Camping fees

These are payable at the self-registration stations in the campgrounds or via the camp hosts. Holders of the following cards are entitled to the specified concession: Senior's Card, Disability Support, Carer Payment, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Age Pension, Disability Support (blind), Carer Allowance and Companion Card.

## Water

Fresh water is available at the visitor centre. The water is untreated and boiling or chemical treatment is recommended. Remember to carry plenty of water with you at all times.

## Swimming

Swimming is provided at Deep Reach Day Use Area. A 200m walk from the car park brings you to the very large, wide pool. Platforms and steps should be used to enter the water. Toilets are located at the car park and barbecues are close to the water's edge. The water is very deep and can be cold in winter, so care should be taken especially with children.

Deep Reach is very sacred to the Yindjibarndi people – please respect this unique environment.

Swimming is not permitted at Jirndawurrunha Pool near the Homestead or surrounding streams because of their cultural significance to the traditional Aboriginal custodians.

## Millstream trails

### Homestead Walk

750m – 30 minutes return – Class 2

This trail follows a compacted gravel path through the Millstream Wetlands, and is suitable for all fitness levels. A series of interpretive panels tell the story of the Millstream Wetlands. Swimming is not permitted in the pool or channels.



### Warrungunha Trail

8km – 2.5 hours return – Class 3

This trail links the Millstream Homestead with Cliff Lookout (Warrungunha) and traverses a number of environments – melaleuca woodland, hummock grassland and riverine woodland. Interpretation panels provide information on these environments. The trail is on compacted gravel for 2.5km before joining the Red Roo dual use walk/cycle trail for the final 1.5km to Cliff Lookout. This section of trail is stony and uneven with some gentle inclines, and is Class 3.



### Red Roo Trail (dual-use walk/cycle)

9km one way – 3 hour walk/45 minute cycle – Class 3

This track begins at Miliyanha campground and ends at Deep Reach Pool. The surface is slightly undulating, flat to stony ground. Cyclists must dismount at Cliff Lookout and walk 300m, as this section is pedestrian use only. The track is wide but care should be taken when riding. Pedestrians have right of way.



### Stargazers Link Trail to Deep Reach

5km return – Class 2

A 500m track links Stargazers campground to the Red Roo Trail. A further 2km along the Red Roo Trail is Deep Reach.



### Cliff top walk

600m return, allow 20 minutes – Class 2

A 300m cliff top walk links three vantage points, from which you can view the Fortescue River and the distant Hamersley Ranges. This trail can be accessed by vehicles from Millstream Road.



George River Gorge

Deep Reach Pool

## Chichester Range trails

Mount Herbert and Python Pool are two of the main attractions in the Chichester Range. The landscape is dominated by rolling hills, hummocks of spinifex, white-barked snappy gums on the uplands and pale coolabahs along creeklines. Animal and plant diversity is high near permanent pools.

### Python Pool

100m – 20 minutes return – Class 3

From the car park, follow the trail along a dry creek bed to Python Pool, a permanent freshwater plunge pool located at the base of a cliff in the Chichester Range escarpment. The water is often fine for swimming but algae growth can be common following periods of low rainfall. The trail is uneven and stony.



### McKenzie Spring

4.5km – 2.5 hour return – Class 3

From the Mount Herbert car park, follow the Chichester Range Camel Trail from Mount Herbert to McKenzie Spring. This was once a watering hole for camel and bullock teams and is a pleasant surprise for walkers, contrasting markedly with the surrounding arid hills. The spring is not suitable for swimming. The trail includes short steep sections and the ground can be uneven with loose surfaces. Return along the same route. A moderate level of fitness is required.



### Mount Herbert Summit

600m – 25 minutes return – Class 3

From the Mount Herbert car park follow the Chichester Range Camel Trail to the base of Mount Herbert, and then follow the track to the top of the mountain for a panoramic view. There are short steep sections and some steps. The ground is uneven with loose rocks.



### Chichester Range Camel Trail

8km – 3 hours one way, 16km – 6 hours return – Class 4

This trail crosses the rugged basalt and sandstone terrain of the Chichester Range. It includes steep gradients, natural obstacles and consists of variable surfaces including loose rocks. A good level of fitness is required. If you are walking both ways, it is recommended to begin at Python Pool. If you are only walking one way, start at Mount Herbert and have a vehicle meet you at Python Pool.



### Cameleers Trail

4km – 1.5 hours return – Class 4

Follow the trail towards Python Pool, turn left at the sign and head up the hill along this steep trail. This hill has caused camel and bullock teams some grief over the years. There are natural obstacles including washouts in some spots, and the surface is loose and rocky. Take time to appreciate the work that went into its early construction. Retaining walls and stone culverts hint at the effort involved in maintaining a route like this.



## Through the past

### Yindjibarndi people

The Millstream Chichester area is a very significant Indigenous cultural site in northern Western Australia. Its cultural and mythological importance stems from thousands of years of occupation, with Millstream being the home of the mythological serpent or warlu, whose presence is still strongly felt at Nhanggangunha (Deep Reach Pool). All the pools are significant in this regard and warrant a high level of respect because of their spiritual and mythological importance.

The broad area of land straddling the Fortescue River (Yarnda Nyirranha) from the Hamersley Range through to the Chichester escarpment is the homeland of the Yindjibarndi people. Ngarluma people's lands run from the Chichester escarpment northward to the sea.

Aside from its highly important spiritual significance, Millstream was an important camp site for inter-tribal meetings. The Fortescue River (Yarnda Nyirranha) provided food and water, particularly during drier months. Along the river, Indigenous people had a varied diet of red meat, fish, reptiles, grubs, eggs, honey, fruits and root vegetables. Extensive areas were burnt to create natural paddocks and attract kangaroos. The dry climate meant that knowledge of the locations of waterholes was important. The Indigenous people (Ngardangarli) were skilled in land management and were nomadic within their traditional boundaries.

Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma people continue to come to the park to spend time on country and to carry out customary activities. They are also represented on the Jirndawurrunha Park Council which, in association with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, manages the strategic direction of the park.

### Millstream pastoral station

Millstream was named in 1861 by the explorer FT Gregory, who reported its favourable grazing prospects. The pastoral lease, first taken up in 1865, changed hands several times before it was taken over by Les Gordon in 1925. In its heyday the station covered more than 400,000ha and ran 55,000 sheep. The present homestead, built in 1920, housed the Gordon family until 1964. It was a tavern between 1975 and 1986, when the lease was purchased by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, now the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The homestead is now a visitor centre.