

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 It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

Bandilngan and

(Windjana Gorge)

Dimalurru national parks

(Tunnel Creek)



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



**PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
SERVICE**

Download this guide and take it with you.



Photos – Tourism WA and DBCA

Front cover *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge).

Above *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge).

Welcome to Bunuba Country

"Bunuba welcome people onto their country as long as they respect country and culture, only go places and do what is allowed." (*Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation (2017) Jalangurru Muwayi – Bunuba Healthy Country Plan, 2017-2027*).

Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) are outstanding natural attractions located in Bunuba country along the Napier Range landscape in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Featuring unique geology and wildlife and drawing in more than 30,000 visitors each year.



Above *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek).

Traditional owners

Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) are important sites within Bunuba country. The Bunuba people have traditional ownership and obligations to ensure these and other important sites are protected and cared for according to Bunuba law and custom. The Bunuba names of the parks recognise the ongoing presence and strong cultural connection and significance of the area to the Bunuba people.

It is vital that Bunuba people are involved in caring for country and in park management and decision making. There are many sites within Bunuba country where evidence of prior occupation and habitation of the area by Bunuba extends to over 47,000 years. This evidence is supported through the Bunuba knowledge of flora, fauna, water sites, food sources, including the rock art, artefacts, stories, songs, and ceremonies handed down through the generations to the present day. *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) are highly spiritual places to Bunuba people.

There are opportunities to learn and immerse yourself in Bunuba culture through guided tours led by the traditional owners. Visit bungoolee.com.au for more information.



Above Brolga.

Planning your visit

Both attractions are located on the Fairfield Leopold Road. *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) National Park is 150km from Fitzroy Crossing and 155km from Derby. *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) National Park is situated 36km south east of *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge). The only access is by unsealed roads in a four-wheel drive vehicle. Road conditions can vary greatly and change rapidly, and roads are often closed from October to April due to the wet season. The national parks are open to the public from the end of the wet season, depending on weather and road conditions. Late April to late November is the dry season, typified by clear warm days and cool nights. Temperatures range from about 35°C during the day to 12°C at night from May through July. Temperatures outside of those months can be significantly higher. The day-use areas within the parks are open from 6am to 6pm daily. Visitors should contact Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitor centres or DBCA; Parks and Wildlife Service Broome to make sure that the park and roads are open. **Visitors are reminded that pets are not allowed in the parks.**



Above *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) campsite.

***Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) National Park Services and facilities**

Campgrounds are located at *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) National Park. There is no camping at *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek). *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) has two campgrounds: one for campers with generators and one for campers without generators. The campground facilities include showers and toilets. There is also a day-use area with picnic tables, toilets, and an information shelter. Campfires are only permitted in designated fire rings and must be extinguished nightly. All firewood should be brought with visitors and is not to be collected within the park. Fire should be used responsibly and is not permitted during periods of Very High, Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger. Please ask a park ranger if you are unsure about lighting a fire.

***Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) National Park Services and facilities**

An information shelter, picnic tables and toilets are provided near the entrance. Universal access is applicable to toilets only.

Fees and park passes

Visitor fees apply at *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek), which help maintain and enhance the park. Please pay entry fees at the *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) entrance station, by either paying a ranger or depositing the fee in the collection box. If you have paid online, please write the reference number on your self-registration envelope. A range of park passes are available online at shop.dbca.wa.gov.au/park-passes, at the DBCA; Parks and Wildlife Service Broome office and Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitor centres.



Above *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge).

Walk trail classifications

Parks and Wildlife Service walk trails are assigned a 'Class' to indicate degree of difficulty. The walk classes range from Class 1 (universal access), which is suitable for wheelchairs, to Class 5, which require walkers to be fit, experienced and suitably equipped. Check trailhead signs at the start of walks for specific information. The walk trails in this brochure range from Class 2 to Class 4.

Class 2 Hardened or compacted surface which may have a gentle hill section or sections. Easy walk with no bushwalking experience required.



Class 3 Moderate walk trail with clear directional signage. You may encounter minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections; steps; shallow water crossings; and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness is recommended.



Class 4 Trails are in relatively undisturbed environments and are often rough with few, if any, modifications. A moderate to high level of fitness is required. You need to be prepared and self-reliant.



Walk trails

Several walk trails provide opportunities to view the gorge and other park features. Be sure to take adequate drinking water and sun protection.

***Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) National Park**

The Savannah Walk

(Class 3 – 1km return. 30 minutes)

An easy walk over mostly even ground helps you to get to know some of the plants and associated animals of the savannah woodland community outside the gorge.



The Time Walk

(Class 3 – 2km return. 1 hour)

This is a relatively easy walk over undulating ground with some rocky and sandy sections. As you make your way you will be able to see a fossil nautiloid, a type of prehistoric crustacean embedded in the limestone wall.



The Gorge Trail

(Class 4 – 5km return. 2-3 hours)

Walk through the gorge during the dry season between April and October. The river flows for only short periods of the year and mainly consists of isolated pools. The trail is along the riverbank adjacent to the sandy riverbed marked with trail markers. There are occasionally obstacles washed down in previous floods. A sign indicates the end of the trail. Experience the profile of the Devonian Reef and see how shade and soil moisture affect where plants grow. Take plenty of drinking water (4L per person) and sun protection. An information shelter, picnic tables and toilets are provided near the entrance.





Above Black flying fox.

***Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) National Park**

Tunnel View Trail

(Class 2 – 400m return. 30 minutes)

Take an easy stroll to the tunnel entrance to observe the patterns, textures, and colours in the limestone at the rock face.



Subterranean Trail

(Class 4 – 2km return. 1.5 hours)

The adventurous can scramble over the rocks to take a sometimes chilly and occasionally deep wade through several permanent pools within the tunnel to the other side of the Napier Range. A torch and shoes are required to avoid hazards overhead and underfoot. Near the centre of the cave the roof has collapsed and is an excellent place to observe the colony of flying foxes that roost in the trees during the day.





Above Freshwater crocodile.

***Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) National Park wildlife**

Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) National Park supports many plants and animals typical of the Kimberley region. Visitors may see *gayi* (freshwater crocodiles), black flying foxes, corellas and *buwunungu* (black headed python). A range of birds of prey may be seen including falcons, black kites, whistling kites and brown goshawks, along with water birds such as egrets and herons. There may also be glimpses of agile *gurudunggu* (wallabies) or the short-eared rock wallaby at dawn and dusk.

There are more than two hundred plant species in the park. The ancient limestone reef, or Napier Range, is home to very hardy plants like spinifex, rock figs and kurrajong. River figs, Leichardt trees and weeping paperbarks are common throughout the gorge on the river banks. Boabs, eucalyptus and Bauhinia trees are found scattered within the extensive grassland on the plain surrounding the gorge and Napier Range.



Above Bunuba, DBCA Ranger, Shannon Shaw.

***Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) National Park wildlife**

Nine species of bat are known to use the caves within *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek). These include the northern cave bat, the common sheath-tail bat, Finlayson's cave bat, the dusky leaf-nosed bat, the common bent-wing bat and the rare ghost bat, Australia's only carnivorous bat that preys on frogs, lizards, small birds and mammals including other bats. The yellow-lipped bat, found only in the Kimberley, has been little studied but appears to be a strict cave dweller. The orange leaf-nosed bat named for its golden fur prefers limestone caves that provide warmth and humidity to help maintain its body temperature when resting. Unlike other bats, orange leaf-nosed bats do not huddle together to keep warm. A colony of black flying foxes is known to roost where the roof of the tunnel has collapsed. During the day, the tunnel provides a protected retreat. At dusk they leave en masse to seek out the blossoms of woodland trees.

Gayi (freshwater crocodiles) are sometimes seen in the cave where they feed on small fish, *jarramba* cherabun (crustacean), frogs and insects. Rainbow fish, bony bream, spangled perch and fork-tailed catfish are found in the pools. Birds such as the black bittern and nankeen night heron are sometimes seen just inside the mouth of the cave, looking for small fish and cherabun. Nankeen kestrels are sometimes heard flying about the cliffs at the entrance to the cave. *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek) is also home to several python species.



Above Image caption. *Photo – credit name*

The legend of Jandamarra

Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge), *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek), *Limalurru* (Lillimilura) Station and the surrounding lands are the setting for the legend of Jandamarra and the resistance of the Bunuba people against European settlers. For three years, Jandamarra led a guerrilla war against the *malngarri* (European settlers) and police. The Bunuba people's raids and ambushes were so effective that it kept the settlers at bay and became a major issue for the colony, eliciting bloody massacres of Bunuba and other Aboriginal people in the region.

"We remember Jandamarra as a great warrior, and as a clever and courageous leader who defended our country against overwhelming odds. We also remember him as a *Jalngangurru*, a man bestowed with spiritual powers that flowed from the timeless law of our country, who could disappear, transform into a bird and shield himself from deadly weapons".

(Excerpt from Jalangurru Muwayi – Bunuba Healthy Country Plan, 2017-2027).

The ruins of the *Limalurru* (Lillimilura) police outpost are accessible to visitors and located 3km from *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) on the way to *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek). Further information about Jandamarra is provided at *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek).



Above *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek).

Caring for the park

Every year more than two million visitors make their way to visit the Kimberley's protected areas. A few simple measures can help conserve the environment and keep it beautiful for years to come.

Plan ahead and prepare Your enjoyment and safety are our concern but your responsibility.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces Stay on the roads and tracks to protect the park.

Respect wildlife Do not disturb or take any animals, plants or rocks. Pets, firearms and fishing are not permitted.

Reduce contamination Do not contaminate water with soaps or sunscreen as they can affect aquatic life.

Minimise campfire impacts Avoid the risk of bushfire. Use your own portable cooking appliance. Only light fires in the fire rings located at *Dulundi* (Silent Grove) campground.

Dispose of waste properly Please take your rubbish with you and dispose of it appropriately in the next town. No bins are provided in the park.

Leave what you find Leave things as you find them for all to enjoy.





Above Freshwater crocodile.

Visitor Safety

Freshwater crocodile risk

When you are entering the Kimberley, you are entering crocodile country. Johnston's (freshwater) crocodiles live in the waterways at *Bandilngan* (Windjana Gorge) and *Dimalurru* (Tunnel Creek). They can become aggressive and cause injury if disturbed. For your safety please do not approach or interfere with these animals.



Heat risk

Extreme heat can be experienced when walking in the Kimberley. Temperatures can exceed 40°C. It is recommended you walk during cooler times of the day. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, a long-sleeved shirt and hat. Carry enough water, minimum of 4L per person. There is no water suitable for drinking in the gorge, avoid dehydration by drinking small amounts regularly.



Save the app that could save your life



triplezero.gov.au

emergencyapp.triplezero.gov.au

Download the free Emergency+ app before your visit. Use the app in an emergency to call for assistance. If there is no mobile phone coverage you **WILL NOT** be able to call **000** but the app will provide you with your GPS location.

For further information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Parks and Wildlife Service

111 Herbert Street, Broome

Ph: (08) 9195 5500

dbca.wa.gov.au

Derby Visitor Centre

Ph: (08) 9191 1423

Fitzroy Crossing Visitor Centre

Ph: (08) 9191 5355

Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

Ph: 9191 0999

Main Roads Western Australia

Ph: 1800 013 314

(24-hour road condition report)



Check for alerts and updates directly related to parks and major trails at alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au and for all emergency information in Western Australia at emergency.wa.gov.au.

Find more park visitor information, book campsites and share your experiences at exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au.

@waparkswildlife



@exploreparkswa



Information current at July 2021.

Publication available in alternative format on request.

