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Bandilngan Windjana Gorge and Dimalurru Tunnel Creek

national parks



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Welcome



Bandilngan Windjana Gorge and Dimalurru Tunnel Creek are outstanding natural attractions located in 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.

The Lennard River runs through Bandilngan Windjana Gorge for 3.5km, carved from a fossilised barrier reef creating limestone walls that rise either side of the river to stand up to 100m tall.

Dimalurru Tunnel Creek is a 750m long tunnel carved out of the limestone range by flowing water. The tunnel is up to 20m high and 15m wide in parts.

There is an array of activities for visitors to see and do, such as simply admiring the world-renowned geology, to viewing freshwater crocodiles basking in the sun, finding fossilised plants and animals in the walls of Bandilngan Windjana Gorge, walking by torchlight through the underground Dimalurru Tunnel Creek, relaxing in the shade under a river fig tree or immersing yourself in the rich history and culture of the area.

Traditional owners

"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*).

Bunuba people are the traditional owners of Bandilngan Windjana Gorge, Dimalurru Tunnel Creek and surrounding areas. The names of the parks recognise the cultural and continuing significance of the area to Bunuba, and their involvement in park management. Their history and mythology are recorded in art and artefacts, and in traditional stories, songs and ceremonies handed down from generation to generation until the present day. Bandilngan Windjana Gorge and Dimalurru Tunnel Creek are highly spiritual places to Bunuba and the Wandjina are the powerful creation spirits that reside there. Hence the name Windjana, which was (mis) recorded by William Forrester, who took up the nearby pastoral lease in 1884 and built the Lillimilura Station Homestead.

There are opportunities to learn and immerse yourself in Bunuba culture through guided tours led by the traditional owners.

Planning your visit

Both attractions are located on the Fairfield Leopold Downs Road. Bandilngan Windjana Gorge National Park is 150km from Fitzroy Crossing and 145km 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 November to April due to the wet season. The national parks are open to the public from the end of 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 15°C at night. The day-use areas within the parks are open from 6:30am to 6:30pm daily.

Visitors should contact Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitor centres or the Parks and Wildlife Service at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to make sure that the park and roads are open.

Left Visiting Bandilngan Windjana Gorge.



Bandilngan Windjana Gorge National Park

Above Bandilngan Windjana Gorge.

Services and facilities

There are two campgrounds located in the park, only one permits the use of generators. The campground facilities include showers, toilets and water. There is also a day-use area with picnic tables, toilets and an information shelter. Camp fires 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.

Universal access is applicable to toilets only.

Wildlife

Bandilngan Windjana Gorge National Park supports many plants and animals typical of the Kimberley region. Visitors may see freshwater crocodiles, black flying foxes, corellas and pythons. A range of birds of prey may be seen including falcons, white-bellied sea eagles, whistling kites and brown goshawks, along with water birds like egrets, herons, brolgas and glossy ibis as well as bustards. There may also be glimpses of northern nailtail and agile wallabies or the short-eared rock wallaby at dawn and dusk.

Below Bird life at Bandilngan Windjana Gorge.



Top right Bower bird. **Above** Freshwater crocodile.

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 trees and the twin-leaved Bauhinia are found scattered within the extensive grassland on the plain surrounding the gorge and Napier Range.

Below Python.



Below Brolgas.



Above Dimalurru Tunnel Creek National Park.

Fees and park passes

Visitor fees apply at Bandilngan Windjana Gorge National Park, which help maintain and enhance the park. Please pay entry fees at the entrance station, by either paying a ranger or depositing the fee in the collection box if the area is unattended. A range of park passes are available online at shop.dbca.wa.gov.au/park-passes, and at the Parks and Wildlife Service office and Derby and Fitzroy Crossing visitor centres.

Take care

Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.

BE CAUTIOUS Stay on the roads and tracks to protect the park.

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

BE WISE Do not contaminate water with soaps or sunscreen as they can affect aquatic life.

BE CAREFUL Avoid the risk of bushfire. Use your own portable cooking appliance. Only light fires in the fire rings located at Bandilngan Windjana Gorge campground.

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

LEAVE NO TRACE Leave things as you find them for all to enjoy.



Bandilngan Windjana Gorge National Park

The legend of Jandamarra

Bandilngan Windjana Gorge, Dimalurru Tunnel Creek, Lillimoolooro 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. He frequently ambushed cattleman and police camps to gain arms and supplies for the remaining Bunuba people. 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.

"To police troopers, he became almost ghostlike. His tracks were often sighted but nowhere was he seen. It was as though the land itself had swallowed him. And in a sense it had, for Jandamarra and the Bunuba people knew every cave, every secret tunnel and crevice that riddled the rocky ranges," Banjo Woorunmurra and Howard Pedersen.

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 Jalgangurru, 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 Lillimoolooro police outpost are accessible to visitors and located 3km from Bandilngan Windjana Gorge on the way to Dimalurru Tunnel Creek.



The Gorge Trail.

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.

The Time Walk

(Class 3 – 2km return. 1 hour)



This is a relatively easy walk over undulating ground with some rocky and sandy sections. Take a journey back in time through the Age of Fishes; discover relics of the super continent Gondwana and descendants of the dinosaurs and the mega fauna.

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 Gorge Trail

(Class 4 – 7km return. 2 to 3 hours)




Walk through the gorge during the dry season between April and October.

The trail is along the river bank adjacent to the sandy riverbed and is mostly unmarked. 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 (2L per person) and sun protection.



Top Black flying foxes.

Above Dimalurru Tunnel View Trail.



Dimalurru Tunnel Creek National Park

Above Dimalurru Tunnel Creek.

Services and facilities

An information shelter, picnic tables and toilets are provided near the entrance.

Universal access is applicable to toilets only.

Wildlife

At least six species of bat are known to use the caves within Dimalurru Tunnel Creek. These include the northern cave 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.

Freshwater crocodiles are sometimes seen in the tunnel where they feed on small fish, 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 often seen and heard flying about the cliffs at the entrance to the cave. Dimalurru Tunnel Creek is also home to several python species.

Walk trails

Dimalurru Tunnel View Trail

(Class 2 – 400m return. 30 minute)



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 center of the cave the roof has collapsed and is an excellent place to observe the colony of flying foxes that roosts in the trees just inside the cave during the day.

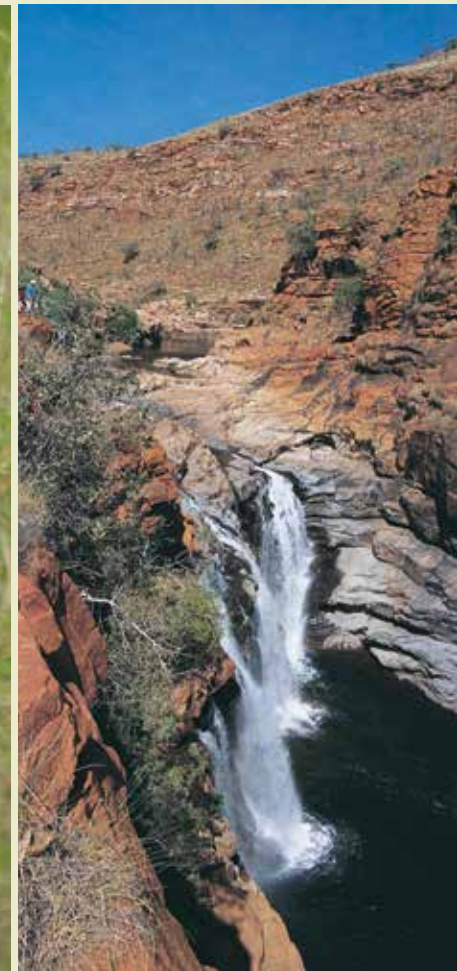
Lennard River Gorge

Walk trail

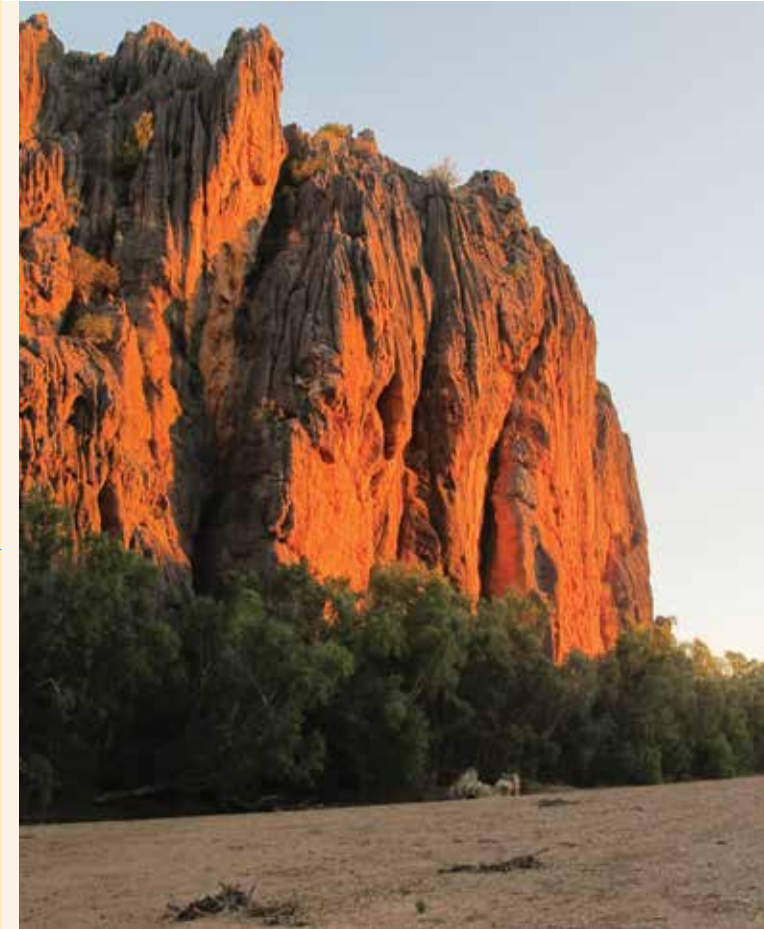
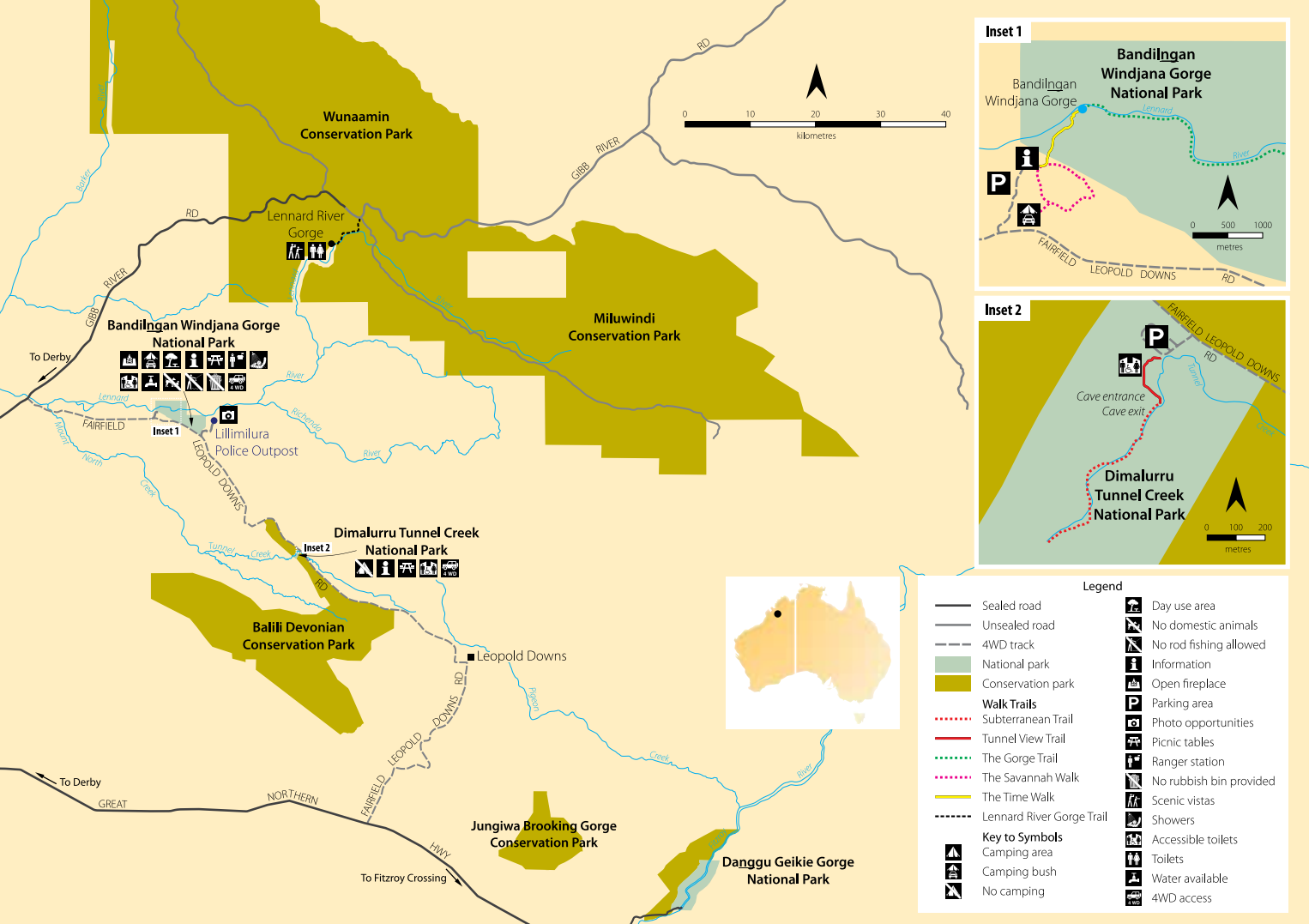
(Class 4 – 3km return. 2 hours)



Unlike the geology of Bandilngan Windjana Gorge and Dimalurru Tunnel Creek, Lennard River Gorge is part of the Miluwindi Conservation Park. One side of the gorge is Leopold sandstone, and the other is dolorite. The 3km (return) walk from the car park takes you along a creek line and then up onto the King Leopold sandstone before culminating in a lookout where the falls can be viewed.



Above Agile wallaby. **Above right** Lennard River Gorge.



Below left and above BandiIngan Windjana Gorge National Park.

For further information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Parks and Wildlife Service Broome Office

111 Herbert Street, Broome

Ph: (08) 9195 5500

dbca.wa.gov.au

Fitzroy Crossing Visitors Centre

Ph: (08) 9191 5355

Photos – Tourism WA and DBCA

Front cover Dimalurru Tunnel Creek.



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