



Cape Range National Park

Cape Range National Park in the Pilbara region is known for its breathtaking scenery, startling contrasts and outstanding ecological values. The park is on the Register of the National Estate and, together with Ningaloo Reef, has been earmarked for possible World Heritage listing.

Above Yardie Creek Gorge, Cape Range National Park.

Opposite page

Top right Turquoise Bay, Cape Range National Park.

Photos – David Bettini

Encompassing diverse landscapes of high plateau shrubland, deep rocky gorges and flat coastal plains, the park offers habitats to an amazing array of wildlife, including extraordinary subterranean creatures found nowhere else in the world.

Range to reef

The park's rugged limestone range extends approximately 100 kilometres along the length of the peninsula, offering great opportunities for visitors to walk among deep gorges and across exposed scenic high country, such as Mandu Mandu Gorge (three kilometres, two hours) and the Badjirrajirra Trail (eight kilometres, five hours). From the foot of the range, a narrow coastal plain extends to sand dunes and the beaches, waters and coral reefs of the world-renowned Ningaloo Marine Park.

The limestone that forms Cape Range was laid down from marine sediments between 30 and 15 million years ago, when the whole area was covered by a warm, shallow sea. Over time, the seabed was thrust upwards

as the Earth's surface was faulted and folded. During some periods of extremely high rainfall, the range was deeply eroded into weathered surfaces and steep canyons.

Subterranean wildlife within the park includes species considered rare or likely to become extinct. The underground waterways within the park provide important habitats for these species and have been identified as nationally significant.

Euros, emus and perenties are abundant and the black-footed rock-wallaby is common on the cliffs of Yardie Creek. More than 200 bird species have been recorded in the area. The wildflowers are typical of the arid Pilbara region, but due to the area's relative isolation and geological history, the flora has some peculiarities. Some species, such as Sturt's desert pea (*Swainsona formosa*), have evolved distinctive forms, while others now isolated at Cape Range were once more widespread in northern Australia. Twelve plant species are found nowhere else but on the peninsula.



park facts

Where is it? The park's northern boundary is 39 km from Exmouth, travelling north and around the Cape. The southern boundary is 70 km north of Coral Bay (four-wheel-drive access only). Features on the eastern side can be reached via the Charles Knife and Shothole Canyon roads, south of Exmouth.

Travelling time 40 minutes from Exmouth, 3 hours along the coast from Coral Bay.

Total area 50,581 ha

What to do Walking, beachcombing, camping, canoeing, picnicking, birdwatching, turtle watching and wildlife watching at Yardie Creek. Four-wheel-drive safaris are available from Exmouth.

Facilities Milyering Visitor Centre (drinks and souvenirs available at most times). Mangrove Bay bird hide. Picnic facilities at many sites. Camping areas are signposted (no campfires allowed) and fees apply. Water is available at one bore within the park and visitors are advised to bring their own drinking water. You can also stay at a wilderness camp within the park (swags and safari tents provided). Just outside the park, chalets, units, on-site vans and caravan sites are available at Yardie Homestead and at Lighthouse Caravan Park, 3 km from Tantabiddi boat ramp.

Must see sites The sheer walls of Mandu Mandu Gorge and the spectacular vistas of the gorge and ocean from Yardie Creek View.

Naming The range is on North-West Cape, so has been called Cape Range.

Campsites along the park's coast are adjacent to the magnificent Ningaloo Marine Park. The park access road is sealed, with two-wheel-drive access to camp and day-use sites. Four-wheel-drive is needed to cross Yardie Creek. Conditions change quickly with rain and access may become restricted. Campsites have limited facilities, without power or water. Fees apply and there are restrictions to the length of time you can camp in the park.

Milyering Visitor Centre is open

every day except Christmas Day. Displays, brochures and videos explain the natural communities of the park and adjacent marine park and a small library provides information for those with special interests.

Future plans

A draft management plan for the park was released for public comment earlier this year. It proposed strategies to ensure a range of high quality, sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities continue to be provided

within the park, such as developing greater visitor opportunities away from the coast and nearer to the range, and improved day-use facilities.

A key part of Cape Range's future management is the involvement of traditional custodians, through the Yamatji Land and Sea Council, as the park contains many important Indigenous sites. Archaeological research has uncovered remnants from ancient marine-based communities, some of which are 25,000 years old.

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