



Lesueur National Park

The stunning floral diversity of Lesueur National Park is now more accessible thanks to a redevelopment project resulting in new walking trails and interpretive information sites.

Above Mount Lesueur in Lesueur National Park.

Opposite page

Top right Signage on the Lesueur Trail.
Photo – Sallyanne Cousans

Far right Queen of Sheba orchid (*Thelymitra variegata*).

Right White-breasted robin.

Photos – Babs and Bert Wells/DEC

Lesueur National Park is renowned as one of the most important flora conservation reserves in Western Australia. Its 27,987 hectares harbour more than 900 known species of flora as well as an ever-changing landscape of salt lakes, remnant coastal dunes, laterite ridges and attractive hills and gullies. Such is the level of biodiversity in the park and its surrounds that it has been declared one of Australia's 15 national biodiversity hotspots. These hotspots recognise areas of high biological diversity that are under threat.

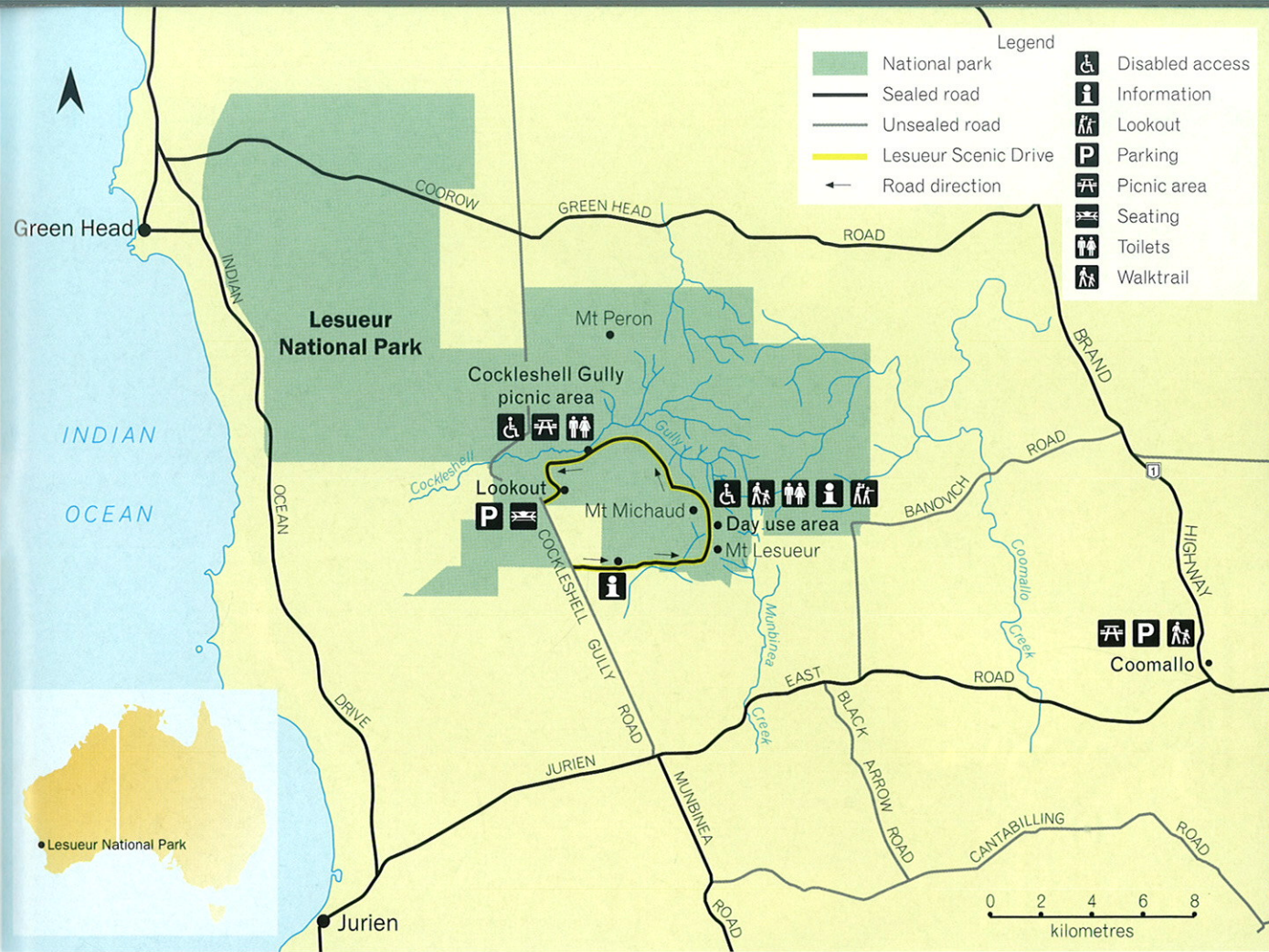
Natural riches

Examine the flora of Lesueur National Park and you'll find a kaleidoscope of different species types. This is particularly obvious in spring when the greens and browns of the bush erupt into lashings of brilliant colour. Scarlet red kangaroo paws brighten the undergrowth while smoke bush transforms whole landscapes into tones of beautiful, dusky grey. *Verticordias*,

Hakeas, *Grevilleas*, *Leschenaultias* and more all explode into a blaze of different colours, providing a viewing spectacle for those who take the time to get up close and examine this nature-rich landscape.

Many of these flora species grow nowhere else in the world. In fact there are more than 250 endemic plant species in the area, many of which are restricted to the heaths and scrub heaths.

These species-rich and endemic flora communities also offer a stronghold for fauna. The park is home to at least 52 species of reptiles, 122 species of native birds and 15 native mammal species. Sandplain birds are particularly prolific, with honey eaters, thornbills and several different wren species commonly seen flitting delicately through the bush. You may also be lucky enough to spot the threatened Carnaby's cockatoo squawking raucously from the branches or perhaps a western rosella or pink and grey galah.



History

The Lesueur area was traditionally the home of the Yued—Aboriginal people who are thought to have lived here from tens of thousands of years ago. The Yued refer to Mount Lesueur as “Koomba Chiler” and say it served as a landmark to guide people here to trade such items as shields, flint spearheads, stones, shells, animal skins and even women’s hair.

It wasn’t until 1801 that Europeans officially recorded the area, when the French ship *Naturaliste* sailed past Jurien Bay. The trip resulted in the naming of Mount Lesueur after Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, a topographical painter and natural history artist on board the *Naturaliste*.

Exploring the park

The best way to explore Lesueur National Park is to drive the 18-kilometre sealed Lesueur Scenic Drive on the eastern side of Cockleshell Gully Road. This one-way-loop drive guides you past steep, red laterite hills and flat top mesas blanketed in rich green kwongan heath with strips of white-trunked wandoo. You can stop at ‘wildflower discovery nodes’ along the

way—stopping points where you can get out to marvel at the plant growth.

The more energetic can set out on walking trails. The easiest option is the 400-metre return Botanical Path, which is wheelchair accessible. It features interpretive signs that help you identify local plants and fill you in on their biology and traditional uses. This trail leads you to Iain Wilson Lookout, where the four-kilometre return Lesueur Trail travels to the top of the 313 metre-high Mount Lesueur. This trail passes a range of floral communities and offers sweeping views from the peak.

An easier option is the Gairdner Ridge 2.5-kilometre loop trail which

starts at the Drummond car park day-use area and travels through low heath, by kwongan heath and low woodlands of wandoo to the sandstone outcrops of Gairdner Ridge.



park facts

Where is it? 250 kilometres north of Perth along the Brand Highway.

Total area 27,987 hectares.

What to do Walk trails, scenic drive, photography, bird watching, wildflower watching.

Must see site Mount Lesueur.

Facilities Interpretive signage.

Nearest DEC office Jurien Bay, 124 Bashford Street, Jurien. Phone (08) 9652 1911.

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