



Wellington National Park

Wellington National Park is a natural playground boasting a range of activities for adventurous weekenders. Within the park, visitors will find secluded camping in a relatively untouched wilderness area.

Above Honeymoon Pool.
Photo – Cliff Winfield

Opposite page

Top right The Wellington Dam was built as part of an unemployment project during the Great Depression. The dam wall rises 34 metres.

Photo – Vicki Winfield/DEC

Above right A splendid fairy-wren pair.
Photo – Wayne Eddy/Sallyanne Cousins
Photography

Far right Near Long Pool on Lennard Drive.
Photo – Cliff Winfield

An easy drive for a weekend away and with camp sites nestled within thick forest, Wellington National Park provides a great setting to escape the busy city life. The reserve encompasses thousands of hectares showcasing the flora and fauna of the state's south-west, a region that attracts 3.4 million visitors a year.

During winter, fog rising off the Collie River drifts in between the blackbutt trees (*Eucalyptus patens*) and over moss-covered logs. In summer, the river becomes an ideal spot for canoeing and swimming. Early morning in the camp site sees noisy birdlife flit among the trees and along the decking constructed at the water's edge.

Listed as an 'A' class reserve in 2000, the park contains the largest reservoir in the south-west—the Wellington Dam—and a diverse landscape composed of seasonal wetlands, and forest and woodland vegetation. The park is punctuated by granite outcrops and visually dominated by marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and jarrah

(*E. marginata*) trees that overhang lush undergrowth.

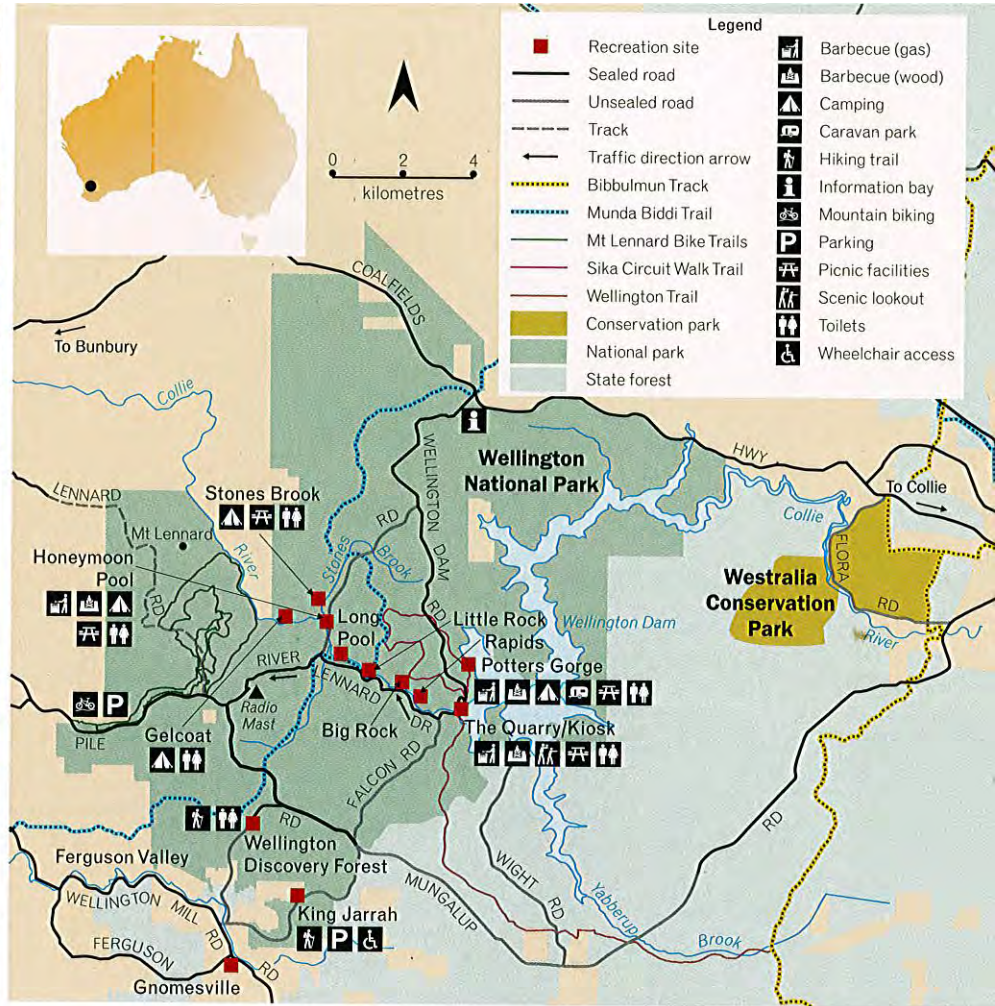
The river system ensures the park is composed of a variety of distinctive micro-habitats, numbering seven forest ecosystems. A highlight of the park is a number of deep, clear pools, well flushed by small falls.

Although Collie has a history of timber harvesting, some sections in the lower river valley proved inaccessible to workers. As a result, the park contains mature vegetation now atypical of the former logging region.

History

The boundaries of the Kaneang and Willman Aboriginal groups intersect within the park. Nyoongar migratory routes incorporated the area for use as a water source and a hunting ground. The river is believed to be sacred and created by a Walgu spirit that formed the surrounding hills while manifested as a water snake.

European exploration of the area began in the mid-1800s. After Captain James Stirling ventured up the river



in the 1830s, Collie developed a coal industry. Workers' cottages still present in the park are evidence of the Wellington District's forestry history.

During WWII the park hosted a number of army training camps for young men preparing to go to New Guinea. They stumbled upon local couples honeymooning alongside the river; hence the pool earned its colourful nickname, Honeymoon Pool.

Natural attractions

The park is ecologically diverse, with 331 native plant taxa found there. The forest provides a home for a number of protected species, six of which are on the Department of Environment and Conservation's conservation priority list. Bull banksia (*Banksia grandis*), sheoak (*Allocasuarina fraseriana*), water bush (*Bossiaea aquifolium*), snottygobble (*Persoonia longifolia*) and grasstrees (*Xanthorrhoea* sp.) provide habitat for chuditch (*Dasyurus geoffroyi*), brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), forest red-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso*), ducks, wrens and owls. Some 66 species of native bird are found in the park, three of which are specially protected.

Exploring the park

Places of interest in the park include the King Jarrah site, Rapids, Little Rock and Long Pool. The 20-kilometre Wellington Trail is aimed primarily at group walkers and provides a connection from Wellington Dam to the Bibbulmun Track, which runs to the east of the park. The Munda Biddi Trail and Mt Lennard Bike Trails provide opportunities for cyclists.

Wellington Discovery Forest within the park is a living classroom popular with school groups as well as tertiary institutions and professionals. Here visitors can learn about forest ecology, research and management zones, including on a self-guided interpretive trail. Sections of the forest are used as a silvicultural demonstration area.

A number of camp sites are available and feature excellent facilities including fire pits, toilets, gas barbecues and a camp kitchen. Honeymoon Pool camp site is dominated by a large swimming hole, perfect for a dip in summer and a tranquil sight in winter. Gelcoat camp site is 500 metres further downstream, and Stones Brook is also nearby. Potters Gorge is able to accommodate camping vehicles and provides users with a view over Wellington Dam.



park facts

Where is it? Eight kilometres from Collie, a two-and-a-half hours' drive from Perth.

Total area: 17,000 hectares.

What to do: Camping, fishing, swimming, seasonal marroning, abseiling, rock climbing, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, mountain bike riding, white-water rafting.

Facilities: Wood and gas barbecues, Wellington Dam Cafe, Wellington Mill Cottages, parking, two-wheel-drive and four-wheel-drive access, toilets, picnic tables, camp kitchen, fire rings with firewood supplied, access to water for swimming and canoeing.

Camping: Camping is permitted at Honeymoon Pool, Potters Gorge, Gelcoat and Stones Brook. Fees apply.

Park fees: No entry fees to the park apply.

Nearest DEC office: Wellington District Office, 147 Wittenoom St, Collie, phone (08) 9735 1988.

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Prepress and printing GEON, Western Australia.

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December 2011

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ISSN 0815-4465

Please do not send unsolicited material, but feel free to contact the editors.

Published by the Department of Environment and Conservation, 17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia.

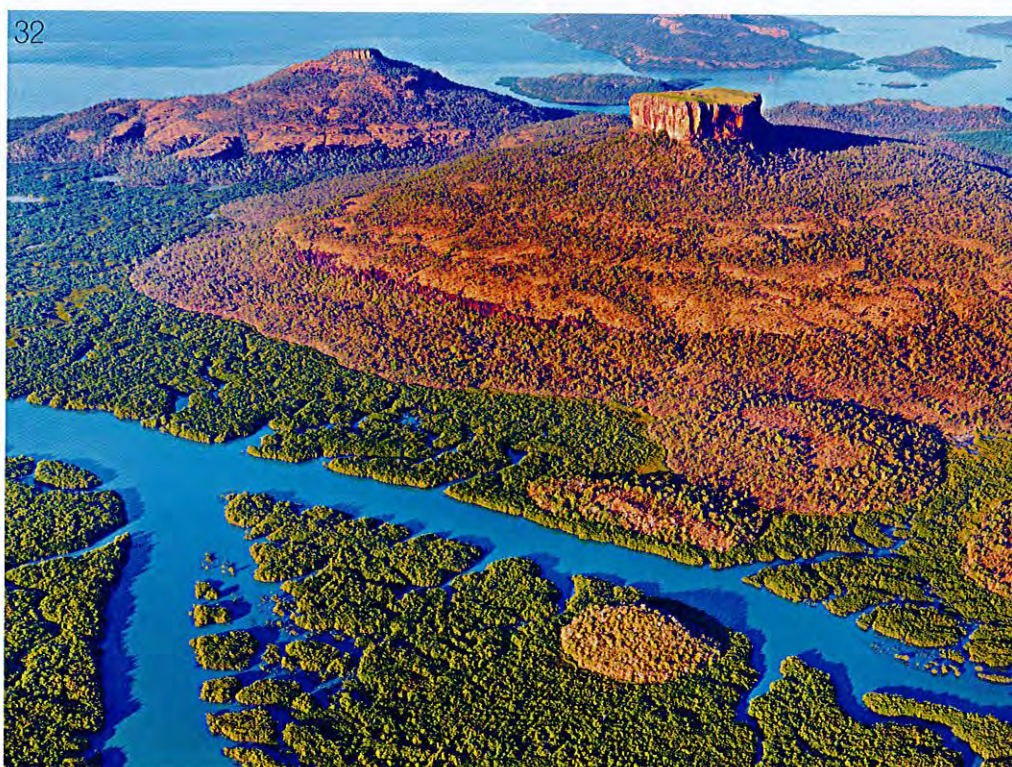
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