



John Forrest National Park

The state's oldest national park, named after Western Australia's first Premier Sir John Forrest, has a history rich in Aboriginal culture, colonial development, conservation and recreation.

Above Blue leschenaultia.
Photo – Jiri Lochman

Above right from top Swan View Tunnel and Jane Brook.
Photos – Marie Lochman

Far right New Holland honeyeater.
Photo – Jiri Lochman

John Forrest National Park was set aside for conservation in 1898 and proclaimed a national park in 1900. Originally called Greenmount National Park, it was later renamed Forrest National Park and then John Forrest National Park.

Being so close to the state's capital city, just 26 kilometres east of Perth, the area has had a close association with people throughout its 113-year history as a national park. It is a popular place to spend the day and take a bushwalk, view wildlife or enjoy scenery. Its elevated position on the Darling Scarp offers excellent views across the Swan Coastal Plain, taking in Perth and Fremantle.

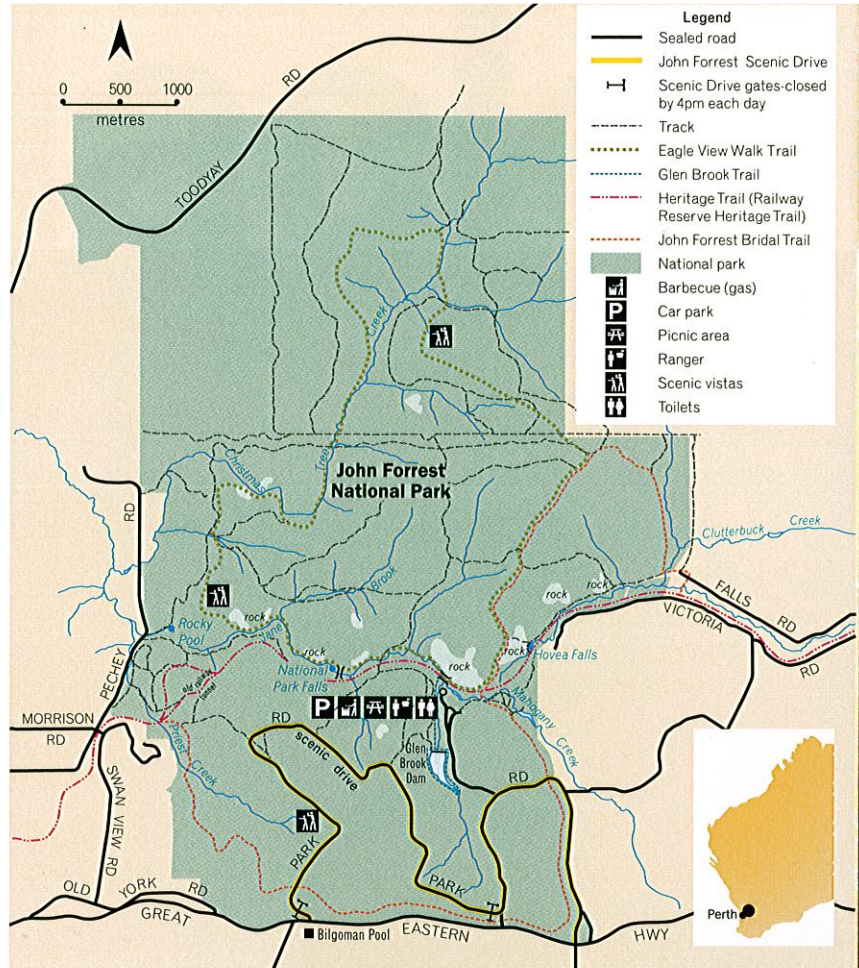
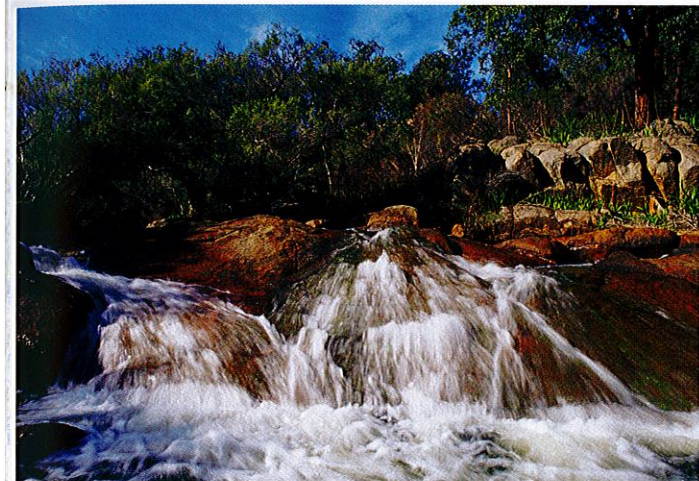
History

The Midland to Guildford area supported a significant Nyoongar population before European settlement. They hunted in the area where John Forrest National Park now occurs and used Jane Brook Valley as an ancient highway to cross the Darling Scarp to the more open

country in the east. Jane Brook, one of the tributaries to the Swan River, also has a connection to the Dreamtime serpent, the Waugal, being one of the waterways created as the serpent traversed the landscape.

Following European settlement, the famous engineer CY O'Connor oversaw the construction of a new section of the railway line from Midland to Mundaring through the park. The work included the creation of the Swan View Tunnel in 1895. The railway tunnel now forms part of the John Forrest Heritage Trail, where people can walk or cycle through the tunnel's 340-metre length to gain a glimpse into the state's rail history.

With the construction of the rail line, John Forrest National Park became a popular place to visit, especially after work began to develop the park for recreational use. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, sustenance workers built gardens, rock walls and pathways. Jane Brook was dammed to create a swimming pool. Small picnic shelters were built in the style of mini cottages, some of which



remain today. Workers also constructed a small church, which became a park landmark before it was burnt down by vandals in the 1960s.

Wildlife and walk trails

The heart of the park contains barbecue and picnic facilities, gardens, a tavern and ranger's station. Aside from visitor and land management facilities, however, the park is largely undeveloped.

The valley floor is dominated by flooded gums, swamp peppermints and paperbarks, while the slopes support jarrah, marri, wandoo and powderbark trees. John Forrest National Park is also characterised by expanses of granite outcrops that support mosses, orchids and sundews.

The park is home to a variety of animal life, including honey possums (*Tarsipes rostratus*), western pygmy possums (*Cercartetus concinnus*), mardos (*Antechinus flavipes*), western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*) and echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*). Bird species such as western spinebills, parrots, splendid fairy-wrens, rufous and golden whistlers and New Holland honeyeaters are also found here.

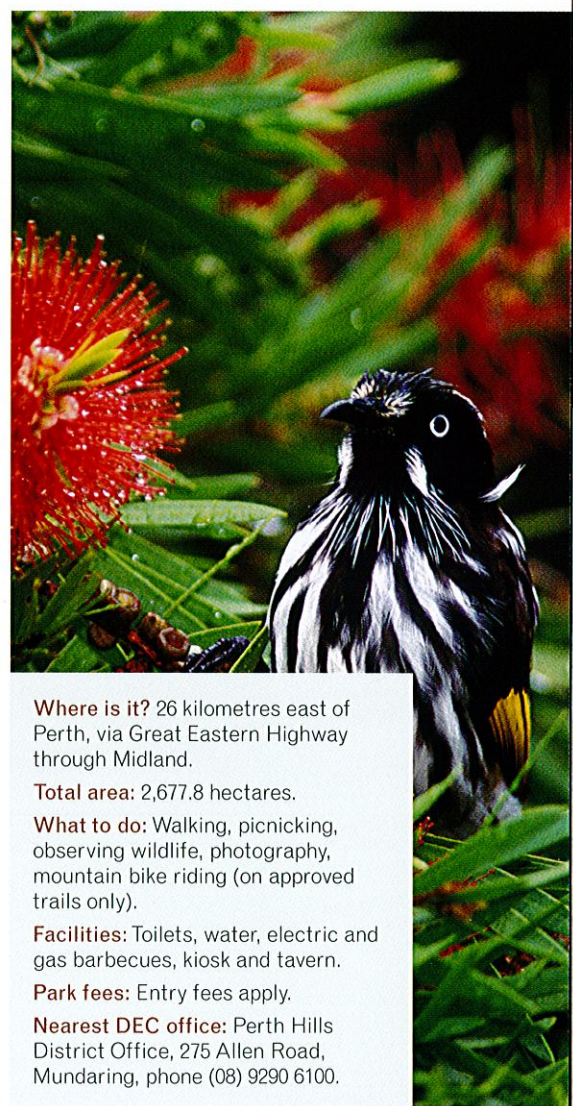
Wildflowers abound in John Forrest National Park. The first touch of

spring brings rich violet hovea (*Hovea chorizemifolia*) flowers that contrast beautifully with green shrubbery. Blue leschenaultia (*Lechenaultia biloba*) and golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) also pepper the landscape.

The waters of Jane Brook tumble through the park's centre in wintertime. Rocky Pool, on the western edge of the park, provides the perfect spot to sit and watch the waters of Jane Brook fall down a series of rapids into the pool.

There is a number of walk and cycle trails within the park. The 10.2-kilometre John Forrest Heritage Trail stretches from east to west across the park, following the old railway line. People have the option of travelling east or west from the starting point at the main picnic area. Going west, visitors will reach National Park Falls, one of two waterfalls in the park, where water rushes down a 20-metre rock face after winter rains. Heading east along the trail visitors will find Hovea Falls, which flows more sedately over a large granite sheet.

John Forrest National Park has long been a part of the lives of many Western Australians, from when Aboriginal people lived and hunted in the area, to colonial times and, more recently, as a key conservation and recreation space.



Where is it? 26 kilometres east of Perth, via Great Eastern Highway through Midland.

Total area: 2,677.8 hectares.

What to do: Walking, picnicking, observing wildlife, photography, mountain bike riding (on approved trails only).

Facilities: Toilets, water, electric and gas barbecues, kiosk and tavern.

Park fees: Entry fees apply.

Nearest DEC office: Perth Hills District Office, 275 Allen Road, Mundaring, phone (08) 9290 6100.

- 49 Slowing the extinction of insects
Translocations of insects and their host plants is helping to conserve biodiversity in the south-west.
- 55 A tree marked B
The shifting sands of Nambung National Park have revealed long-forgotten historical secrets.
- 60 Citizen scientists monitor marine change
Everyday fishers, divers and marine enthusiasts are helping to document marine species distribution as part of a new monitoring program.

Regulars

- 3 Contributors and Editor's letter
- 9 Bookmarks
500 Plants
Australasian Nature Photography
Adventures in Wild and Wonderful Places
- 40 Feature park
John Forrest National Park
- 31 Endangered
Purple-crowned fairy-wren
- 62 Urban Antics
Grass trees

Publishing credits

Executive editor Madeleine Clews.

Editors Samille Mitchell, Joanna Moore.

Scientific/technical advice Kevin Thiele, Lachie McCaw, Keith Morris, Shaun Wilson.

Design and production Lynne Whittle, Gooitzen van der Meer, Peter Nicholas.

Illustration Gooitzen van der Meer.

Cartography Promaco Geodraft.

Marketing Cathy Birch.

Phone (08) 9334 0296 or fax (08) 9334 0432.

Subscription enquiries

Phone (08) 9219 8000.

Prepress and printing Advance Press, Western Australia.

© State of Western Australia
June 2013

All material copyright. No part of the contents of the publication may be reproduced without the consent of the publishers.

ISSN 0815-4465

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

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

Visit DEC online at www.dec.wa.gov.au to search the **LANDSCOPE catalogue.**



Department of
Environment and Conservation

