



Torndirrup National Park

Torndirrup National Park boasts facilities at The Gap and Natural Bridge that cater to a range of visitors, and provide a spectacular way to experience the stunning coastline. But there's plenty to do for those who are keen to explore other parts of the park too.

Just 20 minutes' drive from Albany, the 3,936-hectare Torndirrup National Park gives visitors a chance to marvel at the power and force of the Southern Ocean; crashing waves have sculpted the coastline over thousands of years. The park also boasts various rock types, which formed amid high pressures and temperatures between 1,300 and 1,600 million years ago – predating most life on Earth.

GET A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

One of the best vantage points in the park to admire these geological wonders is at The Gap and the Natural Bridge. Upgrades to the facilities at these locations were completed in 2016, and provide visitors with a breathtaking experience (see 'Mind the gap', *LANDSCOPE*, Winter 2016). A state-of-the-art viewing lookout, which caters to people in wheelchairs and

with prams, leads visitors 10 metres out from the edge of the rock, and 37 metres above the crashing waves below. This engineering feat is made possible by five cantilevered beams, which are anchored into the ancient rock formation using rock anchors that are up to nine metres deep. Duplex 2205 stainless steel was used as a stronger and more robust alternative to conventional stainless steel, and fibre-reinforced grated panels create



a lightweight but strong nonslip surface, which provides visitors with views down to the sea and rocks below.

Further east around the coast, a 1.6-kilometre-return walk to the Blowholes provides another exhilarating insight into the area's geology. Water is forced up into a crackline in the granite, creating spray and loud and eerie sounds. The best time to visit is when there is a big swell, and the noise is especially impressive.

Further east, Stony Hill provides stunning, uninterrupted vistas back towards Albany, as well as across King George Sound and Princess Royal Harbour. Between late May and early October visitors should keep their eyes peeled for the tell-tale spurt of water on the horizon that indicates whales are passing through the area on their annual migration.

One of the ocean's giants – a blue whale – is regularly spotted in the area and is thought to be the same one returning each year.

Salmon Holes is one of the most picturesque spots in the park and a new lookout caters to visitors who head there to enjoy the views. The bay is enclosed by tall, steep granite and heath-covered dunes. This area is popular for fishing, particularly during salmon season, which runs from the end of February to the end of April. Fishers are encouraged to 'keep sand between their toes' and fish only from the beach. Rock fishing is extremely dangerous and is not recommended. Wearing a Type 1 life vest is mandatory for anyone at the Salmon Holes who accesses the rocks for any reason at either end of the beach. Safety should always be at the fore; tragically, many lives have been lost there.



Journey to Torndirrup National Park

Scan this QR code or visit Parks and Wildlife Service's 'LANDSCOPE' playlist on YouTube.



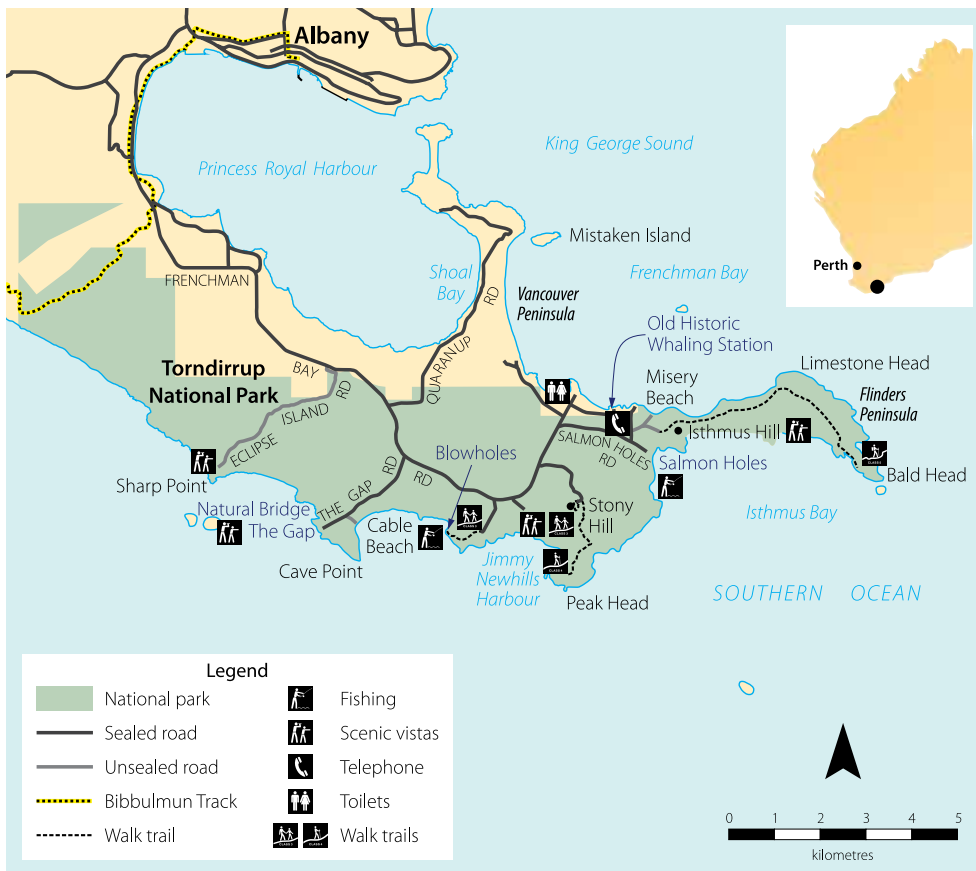
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Main Misery Beach is one of the park's stunning coves.

Anticlockwise from top left Quenda.

Photos – David Bettini; Carpet pythons are known to occur in the park. *Photo – Jiri Lochman;* Coastal jugflowers bloom for much of the year; There are a number of walk trails on which to explore the park. *Photos – Cliff Winfield.* Southern right whales were once poached in the area; A lookout at The Gap provides exhilarating views. *Photos – Guy Skillen*

Parks for people Torndirrup National Park



Below Torndirrup *Hakea* sp.
Photo – Cliff Winfield

Below centre Splendid fairy-wren.
Photo – Jiri Lochman



A 13-kilometre-return walk from Isthmus Hill carpark to the most eastern point of the park – Bald Head – is a rough and rugged walk. But, the views are magnificent as the trail traverses up and down and gains about 600 metres, and usually takes between four and six hours.

A RIOT OF RESIDENTS

Along the coast, visitors are likely to spot some of the seabirds that frequent the area, including flesh-footed shearwaters and great-winged petrels. Birds of prey can also be seen riding the air currents. Further inland, honeyeaters, fairy-wrens and red-eared firetail finches flit among the heath.

The park's varied vegetation houses a variety of native animals, including western ringtail possums (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*), western pygmy possums (*Cercartetus concinnus*), western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*), quendas (*Isodon obesulus*) and bush rats (*Rattus fuscipes*). The tiny, and very endearing honey possums (*Tarsipes rostratus*) are also known to occur in the area. And, in 1987,

a dibbler (*Parantechinus apicalis*) was found in the park.

The park is also home to a range of invertebrate species, including Main's assassin spider (*Zephyrarchaea mainae*), which can be found in long unburnt peppermint woodland. Carpet pythons (*Morelia spilota*), bardicks (*Echiopsis curta*), tiger snakes (*Notechis scutatus*) and dugites (*Pseudonaja affinis*) are also present.

In spring each year, the park is awash with wildflowers and, while it doesn't have the same stunning fields of everlastings that other parts of the State experience, its beauty is slightly more understated and is hidden among the orchids, pitcher plants and other species that can be found throughout the bush.

So, no matter when you visit, there is always something to appreciate – from the roaring winds and wild coastline in winter, to the pristine swimming beaches in summer, the whales that can be spotted off the coast in autumn, and the wildflowers of spring. And, with more capital works planned for the park in the future, it's sure to get even better.

Do it yourself

Where is it? 10 kilometres south of Albany

Total area: 3,936 hectares

What to do: Walking, sightseeing, photography, beach fishing, rock climbing, abseiling (for experienced climbers with adequate gear) and whale watching. A museum dedicated to capturing the area's whaling history is also very interesting.

Facilities: Lookouts, carparks, picnic tables. Please note there are no toilets or potable water in the park.

Nearest Parks and Wildlife Service office: South Coast Regional Office, 120 Albany Highway, Albany.

Please note: The Torndirrup National Park coastline is notorious for accidents and deaths due to people slipping or being washed from rocks into the ocean by unexpected waves, gusting winds or large swells. Visitors are encouraged to exercise caution.

Entry fees apply.