

Lesueur National Park



Caring for the park

Stay on the road: Follow the signs in the park and keep to the tracks marked in this brochure. Other tracks in the park are for management access only. If you drive on them, you risk introducing and spreading dieback disease into other areas of the park.

Be careful: Your enjoyment and safety in natural environments is our concern, but your responsibility.

Be clean: No bins are provided in this remote park. Please take your litter with you (and anyone else's would be helpful!).

Stay cool: Don't light wood fires. Portable gas stoves are permitted.

Protect animals and plants: Firearms and pets are not permitted in national parks, and please make use of the boot-baths.

For further information

National park rangers are always pleased to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you require any information or assistance.

CALM Cervantes
Bradley Loop
Cervantes WA 6511
Ph (08) 9652 7043

CALM Jurien Bay
Lot 124 Bashford Street
Jurien Bay WA 6516
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Visit NatureBase at www.naturebase.net

Front cover Mt Lesueur. Photo – Robert Garvey/CALM

Above Carnaby's black cockatoo.

Left Wildflowers. Photos – Babs and Bert Wells/CALM

Information current at June 2006



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Above Mt Lesueur. Photo – Robert Garvey/CALM

Lesueur National Park

Lesueur National Park was named after Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, a natural history artist aboard the *Naturaliste* on Hamelin's 1801 expedition.

The French government commissioned the sister ships *Naturaliste* and *Geographe* to chart those areas of the coast not documented by Captain James Cook. Many features along the west coast bear the names of members of that expedition, including Mount Peron (the expedition's naturalist) and Mount Michaud (the botanist-gardener). Jurien Bay was named after Charles Marie, Vicompte Jurien, a naval administrator at the time.

Lesueur National Park covers 26,987 hectares and is managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Its status as a national park recognises the area's outstanding conservation, landscape and recreational importance. This was identified in the 1950s, when the Government botanist Charles Gardner, concerned by the effects of agriculture, recommended the creation of a reserve. The area surrounding Mt Lesueur was reserved for educational purposes, but proposals for a national park or a nature reserve were stalled because of the area's prospective coal resources. The park was gazetted on 24 January 1992 following public pressure to stop a major coal mining development.

Geology

Lesueur National Park is 24 km across and has a wide range of geological formations, landscapes and soil types. These vary from salt lakes and remnant coastal dunes in the north-west through to laterite ridges in the east. This partly explains the huge diversity of flora in the park.

Flora

Lesueur National Park boasts an exceptionally diverse range of flora, with more than 900 different species comprising 10 per cent of the State's known flora. The park has seven species of Declared Rare Flora and nine taxa found only in Lesueur, as well as 111 taxa endemic to the region and 81 taxa at their northern or southern limits. The park erupts into colour in late winter and spring as acacias, hibbertias, leschenaultias, melaleucas, gastrolobiums and orchids come to flower. The most common orchids to be seen are pink enamel, purple enamel, cowslip, blue lady, white spider and donkey orchids. In spring several varieties of kangaroo paw are predominant.

The park conserves a variety of vegetation types. The exceptionally diverse low heath, referred to as Kwongan by Aboriginal people, covers a large portion of the park. Creek lines and low areas are filled with woodlands of wandoo, red-gum and banksia. Lesueur National Park is a biodiversity hotspot and ranks as one of the most important reserves for flora conservation in Western Australia.



Above Wandoo woodlands. Photo – Robert Garvey/CALM

Dieback

Dieback (*Phytophthora* spp.) is a soil-borne, water-mould which infects the roots of plants, starving them of nutrients and water. Dieback is a serious threat to the flora of the park. Lesueur is relatively dieback free. To ensure that it remains this way, and to reduce the risk of introducing this disease, boot cleaning stations have been provided on walk trails in the park. As the fungus does not persist in lime rich soils, limestone gabions have been placed in the park drains to reduce the threat of introducing the disease through runoff.

Reptiles

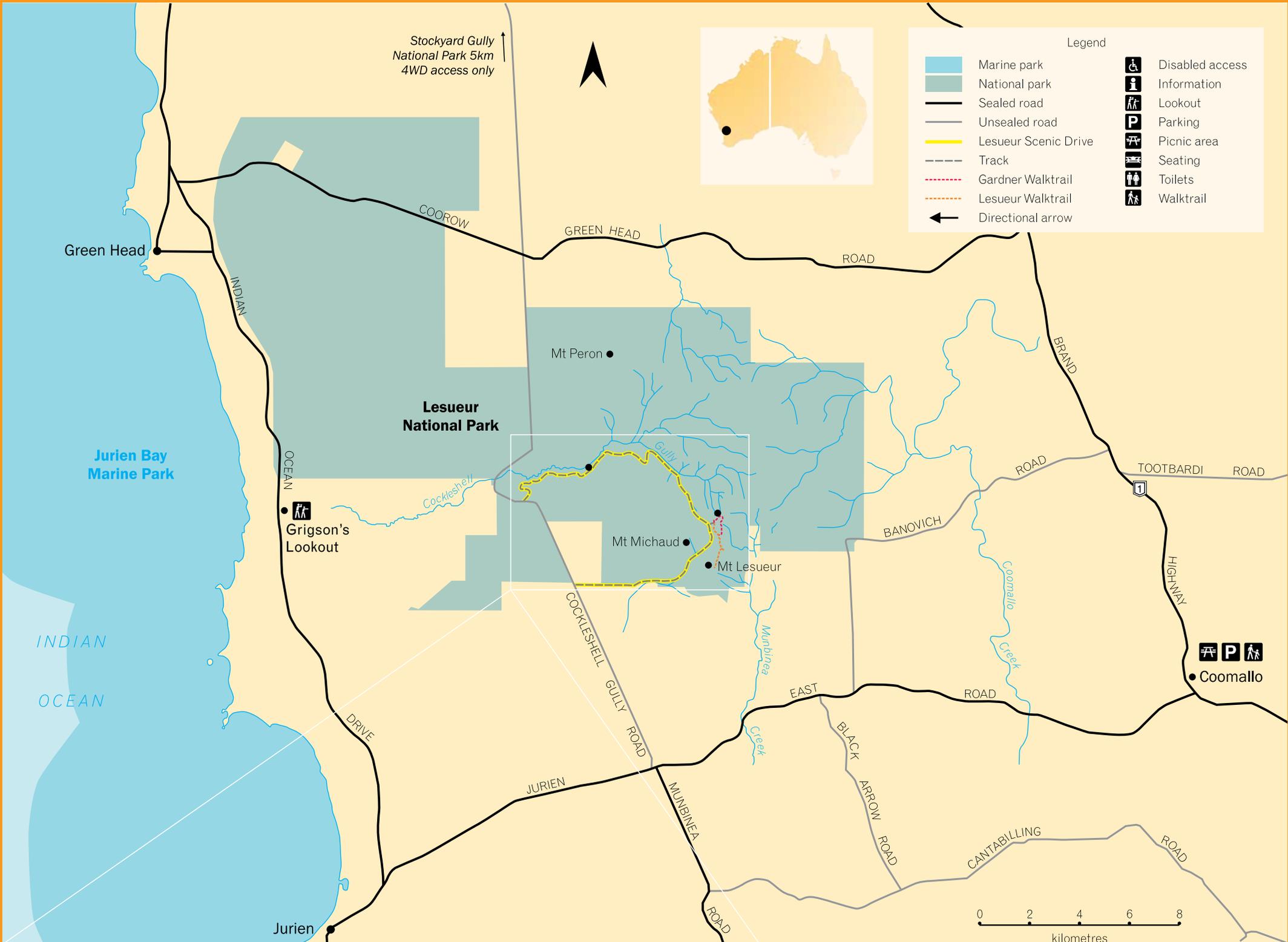
Surveys have identified 52 species of reptile, including 41 lizard species and 11 snake species, in Lesueur National Park. Research has revealed that the coastal heaths contain the highest reptile diversity of any of the world's Mediterranean climate ecosystems. The park is particularly rich in geckoes and legless lizards, and comparable to the Australian deserts which are recognised as having the world's most diverse reptile habitats. As with plants and birds, many reptile species are found at the northern and southern limits of their known range.

Reptiles are generally most active during the day, with the exception of nocturnal geckoes.



Left Dwarf bearded dragon.

Far left Queen of Sheba orchid.
Photos – Babs and Bert Wells/CALM



Stockyard Gully
National Park 5km
4WD access only



Legend

- Marine park
- National park
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Lesueur Scenic Drive
- Track
- Gardner Walktrail
- Lesueur Walktrail
- Directional arrow
- Disabled access
- Information
- Lookout
- Parking
- Picnic area
- Seating
- Toilets
- Walktrail





Above Female and male splendid fairy-wrens.
Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/CALM

Left Wedge-tailed eagle. Photo – Robert Garvey/CALM

Below far left Jewel beetle. Photo – George Watson/CALM

Below left Honey possum. Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/CALM

Birds

The Lesueur area supports a wide variety of bird life, with 122 species of native birds and two introduced species recorded. This diversity of bird species has been attributed to the wide variety of habitats in a large, undisturbed bushland area. Birds of the sandplain are particularly well represented with honeyeaters, thornbills, fairy wrens, southern emu-wrens, white-breasted wrens and calamanthus.

The woodlands of Lesueur have been identified as one of the few remaining breeding habitats in the district for Carnaby's black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus latirostris*). The close proximity of breeding and feeding areas make Lesueur a particularly important area for this species, as its population and range are diminishing.

Many species are also at, or near, the northern limit of their known range, including western rosella, the little wattlebird and the shy hylacola. The salt lakes and freshwater springs are important summer refuges for several species of water birds, including waders that migrate from the northern hemisphere.

Mammals

Fifteen species of native mammals inhabit Lesueur National Park, making it one of the State's richest habitats for native mammals. Four species of dunnart (*Sminthopsis* spp.) and four species of bat occur in the park. The honey possum is thought to be more abundant here than in any other conservation reserve north of Perth and is an important pollinator for many plants.

Insects

The park is home to 29 species of jewel beetle, all of which are protected. These insects can be distinguished by their bright metallic colouring, usually yellow, blue, red or orange, and are between three and 65 mm long.



Activities

An 18.5 km one-way bitumen road takes you through the park, with regular lay-bys to enjoy the scenery and take photographs. Day-use areas where you can have a picnic lunch, bushwalk up Mount Lesueur or wander down Cockleshell Gully are provided. When walking up Mt Lesueur, keep watch for wedge-tailed eagles which are one of Australia's largest birds of prey. The first 250 m of the track is wheelchair friendly and offers a glimpse of the ocean and spectacular views of Lesueur National Park.

Walktrails

1. Carry appropriate quantities of food and water. There is no drinking water provided in the park.
2. Avoid spreading dieback by remaining on marked tracks and using boot cleaning stations provided at the start of all walk trails.
3. Contact CALM's Jurien Bay office if you are planning an overnight walk in the park.