

Kalbarri National Park



Visitor guide



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



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Above Kalbarri National Park coastline.

Kalbarri National Park

The many and varied features of Kalbarri National Park provide visitors with an array of things to see and do. You can marvel at nature's ability to carve the landscape, explore the depths and heights of the river gorges and sea cliffs, admire the floral beauty of the vast, rolling sandplains and learn about the reintroduction and protection of threatened species.

Dramatic landscapes

The spectacular scenery of Kalbarri National Park is the result of many millions of years of geological formation. Beneath this countryside, the geology consists of deep, horizontal bands of multicoloured sands that were deposited in layers 400 million years ago. The resultant sedimentary rock formation is called the Tumblagooda Sandstone.

As the Murchison River carves its way to the sea, magnificent red-and-white banded gorges have been cut by the flow. These gorges meander 80km through the 186,000ha park. Along the coast, the tireless processes of erosion have fashioned bewildering formations from the soaring sea cliffs. The colourful coastal views are breathtaking.

Below Z Bend lookout. **Middle** Chuditch. **Far right** The Murchison River.



Planning your visit

The roads to the township and the park's coastal sites are sealed. The roads to the river gorge sites at Hawk's Head and Ross Graham are also sealed. Park roads to The Loop and Z Bend remain mostly unsealed (first 12km sealed) but are generally suitable for two-wheel-drive traffic.

Kalbarri is about 590km north of Perth and is serviced by commercial coaches. Summer temperatures may exceed 40°C and the weather is often dry and windy. Winter temperatures range from 10°C to 20°C and most rain falls during June and July. Kalbarri is famous for its wildflowers, which begin to bloom after July. The cooler months are the most comfortable for exploring the park.

Located at the mouth of the Murchison River, the charming township of Kalbarri provides the tourist base for visitors to the national park.

Services and facilities

Toilets, lookouts, walk trails and picnic facilities are provided within the national park, at places shown on the map.

There are no camping areas in the national park, but the township offers a range of accommodation options as well as shops, fuel outlets, entertainment and services, including a medical centre, police station, post office and banking facilities.

A range of local tours is available, including scenic flights, guided safaris, abseiling, river gorge canoeing, boat charters and cruises. Contact the Kalbarri Visitor Centre for information and bookings on (08) 9937 1104.





Coastal walks

Short, easy (Class 1 and 2) walks lead from car parks to lookouts at Red Bluff, Eagle Gorge, Grandstand, Island Rock, Pot Alley and Natural Bridge. Beach access trails include:

Pot Alley Beach – Class 3, 400m return

Stepped trail from the car park down a sandstone gully to the Pot Alley Beach.

Eagle Gorge Beach – Class 3, 1km return

Steep switchback trail down sandstone terraces to the Eagle Gorge Beach.

Red Bluff to Beach Trail (Gaba Gaba Yina) – Class 3, 700m one-way

Hike from Red Bluff Beach to the Pederick Lookout on Red Bluff. Trail is steep in places with loose surfaces.

Mushroom Rock Nature Trail – Class 3, 3km loop

Allow one to two hours to explore this loop walk trail linking Mushroom Rock and Rainbow Valley. Trailside signs interpret botanical and geological features.

Bigurda Trail – Class 3, 8km one way

Allow three hours to hike from Eagle Gorge to Natural Bridge. Parts of this trail are rocky and sandy with loose and uneven surfaces. Shorter routes are available by joining the trail at Island Rock or Grandstand.

Walking and hiking in the river gorge

Hawks Head – Class 1, 200m return

Enjoy gorge views from the picnic area and follow a short path to a lookout over the Murchison River.

Ross Graham – Class 3, 700m return

This site provides the easiest access in the park to the river's edge, a place of shade and tranquility.

Z Bend Lookout – Class 3, 1.2km return

A moderately easy walk to a spectacular rock lookout overlooking the river. Take extreme care in this gorge risk area.

Z Bend River Trail – Class 4, 2.6km return

This demanding hike provides river access from the Z Bend Lookout path. Expect loose rocks, steep descents and ladder climbs.

West Loop Lookout – Class 1, 500m return An easy stroll to spectacular views of the Murchison Gorge and park hinterland.

The Loop, Nature's Window – Class 3, 800m return

Witness the switchback course of the Murchison River and a natural rock arch that frames the upstream view.

Longer gorge hikes

The Loop Trail – Class 4, 8km loop

This hike begins and ends at Nature's Window and takes three to four hours. The difficulty is moderate to challenging with steep sections and uneven surfaces.

Four Ways Trail (Idinggada Yina) – Class 4, 6km return

Starting at Z Bend, this challenging hike descends to the river at a place known as Four Ways and is much more difficult on the return journey. Interesting scenery, geology and landforms feature on the hike.

River gorge hikes – Class 5

Allow four days of intense hiking to cover the 38km route through the gorge from Ross Graham Lookout to The Loop. There are no marked trails and river crossings will be necessary.

Two-day gorge hikes may be made from Ross Graham Lookout to Z Bend or from Z Bend to The Loop. More information should be obtained from the park office before making these hikes.

Overnight hikers: please note

- Due to the hazardous terrain, groups undertaking overnight hikes should consist of at least five experienced people. This is the smallest group considered self-sufficient in an emergency.
- Overnight groups must register at the park office before making the trip.
- All rubbish must be carried out of the gorge.





Heat stroke can kill Summer temperatures are extremely hot, particularly in the river gorge. Wear a hat and loose protective clothes. Drink three to four litres of water per day when walking. Walk in the cooler times of the day

Walk trail classification



Class 1 Well defined walk trail with a firm, even surface and no steep sections or steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness.



Class 2 Easy, well defined trail with a firm surface. May include gentle hill sections and occasional steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness but may present difficulties for people with mobility impairments.



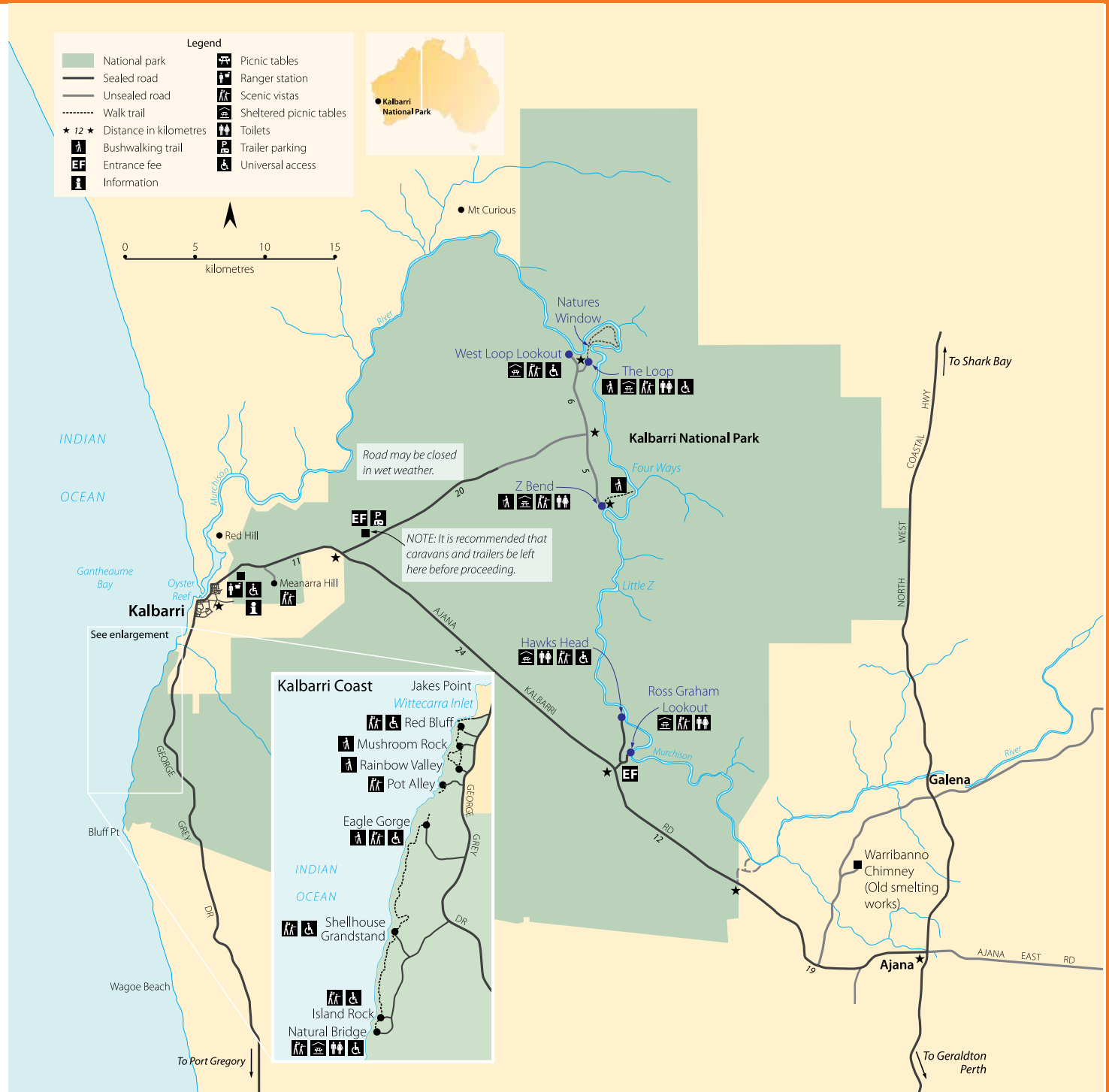
Class 3 Moderate trail with clear directional signage. You may encounter minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections, steps, shallow water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness is recommended.



Class 4 Limited directional signage and difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long steep sections, water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness and bushwalking experience is recommended.



Class 5 No directional signage and very difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long, steep sections and climbs, water crossings, and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt.



Comfort and safety

Easy access is provided to many stunning lookouts but beyond that, walkers need to be prepared and very aware of the natural hazards and their safety.



Heat stroke can kill Summer temperatures are extremely hot, particularly in the river gorge. Wear a hat and loose protective clothes, and carry plenty of water. To avoid dehydration, drink three to four litres per day when walking. Walk in the cooler times of the day.



Drinking water is not available in the park so always carry your own supply.



Wave risk Massive wave surges have claimed lives. Keep well clear of the water's edge near coastal cliffs.



Cliff risk The edges of the cliffs and gorges are unstable and undercut. Stay clear of cliff edges and overhangs. Keep to the paths, lookouts and trails. Wear sturdy footwear.

Walking in Kalbarri National Park

Beyond the lookouts, walk trails in Kalbarri National Park are essentially unmodified with only basic marking. Walkers should read the accompanying information on each trail, and take particular note of the difficulty rating.

Rafting and canoeing



Soon after heavy rains, the Murchison River becomes deep enough to navigate. Only the experienced and well-equipped should attempt this hazardous journey and park rangers should be contacted for advice about making this trip.



Coastal cliffs

Red Bluff View the rugged Zuytdorp Cliffs to the north, which extend more than 200km to Shark Bay.

Mushroom Rock and **Rainbow Valley** See how the natural forces of wind, water and even worms have created weird and delicate shapes amid the multi-coloured layers of ancient sandstone. Access the Mushroom Rock walk trail from either of these sites.

Pot Alley The view south from the car park truly captures the splendour and beauty of this coast. Rock steps lead to the secluded beach below.

Eagle Gorge Enjoy the panorama from the crest or wander down into the tranquil depths of the gorge, where you will discover a delightful beach.

Shellhouse and **Grandstand** The continual pounding of the Indian Ocean claims massive chunks of this soft limestone coast, leaving remnant cliff formations.

Island Rock The resilient Island Rock was once part of the shoreline, but now stands as a solitary 'sea stack'.

Natural Bridge and **Castle Cove** As the coastline slowly yields to the force of the ocean, the fracturing and decaying of the cliffs has created interesting eroded rock formations. Spectacular views can be enjoyed from the safety of lookout platforms.

Caring for country

The Nanda Aboriginal people welcome visitors who respect the park's cultural and natural heritage.

Below Island Rock.



Caring for the park

Stay cool. Don't light fires. Visitors may use their own gas appliances anywhere in the park.

Be clean. Put your litter in bins or take it with you, when you leave the park. Discarded scraps attract feral pigs and goats, which destroy the habitats of native animals.

Pets are not allowed in Kalbarri National Park. They can disturb wildlife and are also at risk of poisoning from fox baits, which are laid throughout the park as part of Parks and Wildlife's *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program.

Visitor fees help protect the park and improve its facilities. Day passes can be purchased at park registration stations on the river gorge roads. Four-week and annual passes are available at Parks and Wildlife offices and visitor centres.

More information

Kalbarri National Park

Ajana-Kalbarri Road
Kalbarri WA 6536
Telephone (08) 9937 1140 Fax (08) 9937 1437

Kalbarri Visitor Centre

Grey Street
Kalbarri WA 6536
Telephone (08) 9937 1104 Free call 1800 639 468

Parks and Wildlife Midwest Regional Office

First floor, The Foreshore Centre
201 Foreshore Drive
Geraldton WA 6530
Telephone (08) 9964 0901

State Operation Headquarters

17 Dick Perry Avenue
Kensington WA 6151
Telephone (08) 9334 0333
dpaw.wa.gov.au



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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.
Information current at May 2017.

Cover Couple hiking at Eagle Gorge. Photo – Tourism WA