The environment

Parks and Wildlife officers are always glad to help. Don’t hesitate to contact them if you need information or assistance.

Visitor fees apply to Cape Le Grand and Stokes National Parks. Fees are used to improve facilities and help offset costs.

Cape Le Grand National Park
PO Box 234, Esperance WA 6450
Phone/Fax (08) 9075 9073

Stokes National Park
PO Box 23, Esperance WA 6450
Phone/Fax (08) 9707 8541

Peak Charles National Park
90 Dempster St, Esperance WA 6450
Phone (08) 9083 2100

Esperance District Office
90 Dempster St, Esperance WA 6450
Phone (08) 9083 2100
Fax (08) 9077 3657

South Coast Regional Office
120 Albany Highway, Albany WA 6330
Phone (08) 9842 4500
Fax (08) 9841 3329

State Operations Headquarters
17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington WA 6151
Phone (08) 9334 0333
Fax (08) 9071 3657

Available in alternative formats on request.

Information current as at May 2016.

The environment

The Esperance region’s national parks and nature reserves form a network of conservation areas protecting native plant communities and landscapes.

At Cape Le Grand, the peaks of the park’s south-west corner are formed from massive outcrops of Precambrian granite and gneiss, exposed by erosion and movements in the Earth’s crust during the past 600 million years. Caves and tunnels found in the peaks are thought to have been formed or enlarged by wave action and underwater currents 40 million years ago, when sea levels were 300m higher than now.

Sandplains cover much of the park and support a variety of plant and animal life including Banksia speciosa and pulchella. These are a source of nectar and insects for the tiny honey possum, while after dark the quenda forages for grubs and worms. Stokes National Park protects the wildlife habitats of Stokes Inlet and surrounding heathland and lake systems. Yate, swamp yate, and paperbark form dense low forests, supporting a variety of waterbirds. Keep a wary eye open for tiger snakes when walking in the wetlands. In autumn look for the magnificent yellow flowers of the bell-fruited manna, Eucalyptus preciosa.

Peak Charles National Park protects a pristine area of dry woodlands, sandplain heaths and salt lake vegetation, in the middle of which rise Peak Charles (651m) and Peak Eleanora.

Stokes National Park

Stokes Inlet Trail – Class 2, 3.8km, 1.5 hours

Choose your section based on your fitness level, equipment and weather conditions. Contours of the hills and wide expanses of sandplains provide excellent views of the surrounding areas. On-site plaques describe changes to the inlet environment.

Coastal Track – 17km

A track leads from the car park, up the east slope of the peak, and includes steep sections of granite that are slippery when wet. The start of the trail is well defined with no markers, passing through open woodland and mildly undulating terrain with loose rocks, to exposed rock at the base of Peak Charles. From here the trail is marked by white-tipped poles. The Coastal Trail is a spectacular but hard walk trail from Rossiter Beach and finishing at Le Grand Beach.

Twilight Trail – Class 3, 3.5km return

Starting at Rossiter Beach and finishing at Le Grand Beach, this section exceeds Class 5 walktrail classification as it exposes incline, rough surfaces, and can be very slippery when wet. The start of the trail is well defined with no markers, passing through open woodland and mildly undulating terrain with loose rocks, to exposed rock at the base of Peak Charles. From here the trail is marked by white-tipped poles. The Twilight Trail is a moderate walk trail suitable for experienced bushwalkers.

Mushroom Rock - Class 3, 600 metres return,

This section is an easy, well defined trail with a firm surface and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt.

Rossiter Bay, a long beach, is one end of the walk. Over the first ridge, the vast expanses of Lucky Bay unfold below. The The easiest part of the walk, with spectacular views in every direction. The rock outcrops are formed or enlarged by wave action and underwater currents 40 million years ago, when sea levels were 300m higher than now.

Moor Homestead, Stokes National Park.

Frenchman Peak, Cape Le Grand National Park.

Lucky Bay, Cape Le Grand National Park.

Lucky Bay to Thistle Cove – Class 3, 1 hour

Thistle Cove to Hellfire Bay – Class 4, 2 hours

The start of the trail is well defined with no markers, passing through open woodland and mildly undulating terrain with loose rocks, to exposed rock at the base of Peak Charles. From here the trail is marked by white-tipped poles. The descent requires crab hand and foot holds. The Twilight Trail is an easy, well defined trail with a firm surface and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt.

Steep incline, rough, unstable surfaces. Very slippery when wet. Winds are often strong. You must be able to life your own weight and use foot and hand holds. The Twilight Trail is a moderate walk trail suitable for experienced bushwalkers.

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Information current as at May 2016.

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Information current as at May 2016.
Things to see and do

Facilities such as toilets, gas barbecues, tables and rubbish bins are provided at places shown on the maps. Information shelters on site will tell you more about these national parks.

Camping

Two campgrounds are situated in Cape Le Grand National Park; one at Lucky Bay and the other at Le Grand Beach (see map). Facilities include flushing toilets, showers and sheltered barbecue areas.

Camping fees apply to both Cape Le Grand and Stokes national parks. Wood fires are not permitted. Free gas barbecues are provided.

At Stokes National Park the main campground is located on the shores of the inlet. Please be sure to bring sufficient fresh water as there are no available water supplies in the park. Basic bush toilets are provided.

Peak Charles National Park has a small campground with nine separate sites suitable for camper trailers at the base of Peak Charles massif with a toilet and shade shelter. There is no fresh water so make sure you are totally self-sufficient.

Boating

In Cape Le Grand National Park, boats are best launched at Lucky Bay. Small boats can also be launched from Cape Le Grand National Park; one at Lucky Bay and the other at Le Grand Beach. Boating is also popular for boating and canoeing, and it is possible to launch small boats. However, the capacity of the inlet for sailing is limited. Although the area of water is possible to launch small boats. However, the capacity of Stokes Inlet is also popular for boating and canoeing, and it is possible to launch small boats. However, the capacity of the inlet for sailing is limited. Although the area of water looks large, there are extensive areas of shallows and rocks.

Fishing

Normal fisheries regulations apply in national parks. Fishing is popular at both Cape Le Grand and Stokes national parks. Many species can be caught, including Australian salmon, whiting and black bream.

Fish safe, be coast safe. Your safety is your responsibility.

Park passes

Visitor fees apply in Cape Le Grand and Stokes national parks. Passes can be obtained at the park or from the Parks and Wildlife District Office.

Above Path to Whistling Rock Cape Le Grand NP. Photo – Tourism WA

Remember

Plan ahead and prepare. Your safety in natural areas is our concern, but your responsibility.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Stay on paths and help prevent erosion. Follow signs and stay on roads marked in this brochure. Normal road rules apply.

Dispose of waste properly. Put your litter in bins or, better still, take it with you.

Leave what you find. Such as rocks, plants and other natural objects.

Minimise campfire impacts. Wood fires are not permitted, except at Peak Charles during the cooler months. Firewood is not to be sourced within the parks. Free gas barbecues are provided at Cape Le Grand and Stokes national parks.

Respect wildlife. Firearms and pets are not permitted within these national parks.

Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors.

Dieback – Help stop the rot

Phytophthora dieback is a plant disease caused by a waterborne mould. The mould is microscopic and lives in the soil. Plants die when the mould attacks their roots, because the roots rot and cannot take up water or nutrients.

Vehicles may spread this pathogen, so it is essential to keep to formed roads and follow road signs in conservation reserves. By keeping out of closed areas you will help to preserve the beauty of these magnificent national parks.

Bushwalkers can help by cleaning mud and soil from their boots before entering a park or reserve.

Put your litter in bins or, better still, take it with you.

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