Karijini National Park

Set in the Hamersley Range in the heart of the Pilbara, the expansive Karijini National Park offers spectacular, rugged scenery, ancient geological formations, a variety of arid-land ecosystems and a range of recreational experiences. This is Western Australia’s second largest national park, encompassing some 827,442 hectares. Massive mountains and escarpments rise out of the flat valleys. The high plateaus is dissected by breathtaking gorges, and stony, tree-lined watercourses wind their way over the dusty plain.

This is an ancient part of the Earth. The slow process of erosion has carved the shape of the land out of rocks that are 2,000 million years old, to form this intriguing landscape and complex ecology.

A variety of ecosystems are represented in the park. These range from precipitous gorges that shelter a remarkable range of plants and animals, to hills, ridges and plateaux covered with spinifex hummocks and scattered eucalypts. Low mulga woodlands and blankets of seasonal wildflowers bloom on lower slopes, valley plains and drainage lines.

Much of the southern half of the park is inaccessible. Visitors concentrate on the spectacular gorges in the north, with their rock pools, waterfalls and unique wildlife. Lookouts, walk trails, camping areas and information shelters are provided to make your visit safe, enjoyable and informative.

Visitor fees

Park visitor fees apply in Karijini National Park. They help maintain and enhance the park. Please pay your entry fees at the entrance stations, Karijini Visitor Centre, or before visiting the park at the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) offices or Pilbara Visitor Centres. If staying at Karijini Eco Retreat, you are still required to pay a park entry fee. At the camping areas, please deposit your camping fees in the collection boxes provided.

Wildlife

Wildflowers vary in abundance with the seasons and from year to year but there is always something interesting in flower. Many plants in the park bloom profusely after rains. In the cooler months the land is covered with numerous yellow flowering species (casuarius) and acacias, northern blues and purple mulla mulla.

Birds are many and varied, especially in fringing vegetation along pools and streams. If you are observant, you may encounter red kangaroos, euros (kangaroos that are common to the rocky country), Rothschid’s rock wallabies, bats and bandicoots. Many species of native rodents and native marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara ningaui are resident, but nocturnal and shy. Reptiles and amphibians such as frogs, geckos, grassans, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes abound within the park.

Two interesting wildlife homes are the large termite mounds, scattered throughout the hummock grasslands, and the rock piles of the pebble mound mouse. Look for mouse mounds on sloping slopes, but please do not disturb them.

Facilities

Visitor Centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre is located just off Banjima Drive. It is open from 9am to 4pm from April to October and 10am to 2pm from November to March.

Camping

Only camp at those sites indicated on the map. Caravan, bus, and generator sites are available at Dale’s Campground and Karijini Eco Retreat. Facilities include bush toilets, gas barbecues and picnic tables.

Dingoes are common around the Dale’s campground. They have learnt to scavenge for food and can become aggressive. Never feed dingoes, supervise your children at all times, walk in groups and store your food and petboxes in your vehicle.

Many toilets in national parks use a composting or biolytic system which are destroyed by the chemicals in black-water. Please use sullage points provided in the towns and some Main Roads Western Australia roadside stops.

WARNING
Blue asbestos present in Yampire Gorge

Asbestos dust may cause cancer when inhaled.

More Information

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

Karijini National Park Visitor Centre

Telephone: (08) 9188 8121
Fax: (08) 9188 8173

Karijini National Park

PO Box 29, Tom Price WA 6751

Ranger (emergency only)

Telephone: (08) 9188 8147

Pilbara Regional Office

Mardie Road, Karratha Industrial Estate

PO Box 835, Karratha WA 6714

Telephone: (08) 9182 2000
Fax: (08) 9144 1118

State Operational Headquarters

17 Dick Perry Avenue, Karratha WA 6151

Locked Bag 604, Bentley Delivery Centre

Bentley WA 6083

Telephone: (08) 9334 0333

www.wdec.wa.gov.au

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Traditional owners

The Banyjma, Yinhawangka and Kurruma Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, call the Hamersley Range Karijini. The name of the park recognises the historic and continuing significance of the area to these people, and their involvement in park management. Evidence of their ancestors’ occupation dates back more than 30,000 years. During that period, Aboriginal land management practices such as ‘fire stick farming’, resulting in a diversity of ecosystems, are represented in the park. These range from precipitous gorges that shelter a remarkable range of plants and animals, to hills, ridges and plateaux covered with spinifex hummocks and scattered eucalypts. Low mulga woodlands and blankets of seasonal wildflowers bloom on lower slopes, valley plains and drainage lines.

Climate

The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert.

Geology

The banded iron formations exposed in many of the rocks in and around the gorges originated more than 2,500 million years ago as iron and silica-rich sediment deposits accumulated on an ancient sea-floor. Over millions of years these deposits were transformed to the pressure of further sediments had driven over them, forcing trapped water to be driven out and gradually turning the sediments into tough, well-bedded rock.

Horizontal compression later caused the rocks to buckle, developing numerous vertical cracks, before lifting to the surface to form dry land.

A sharp drop in sea-level caused the rivers to cut down rapidly through the land, creating sheer-sided gorges. This, combined with with millions of years of erosion, has sculptured the rocks into the present landscape.

The gorges

In the north of the park, small creekbeds, hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year, suddenly plunge down 100-metre cliffs. Further downstream the gorges become wider and their sides change from sheer cliff to steep slopes of loose rock. Finally the drainage systems emerge as alluvial fans into the Fortescue Valley.

The gorges provide a refreshing retreat from the sun and above. Take one of the many walk trails and experience the spectacular scenery, dramatic waterfalls and clear fresh pools.

Water

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Climate

The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. A highly variable, mainly summer rainfall of 250-350 millimetres is often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones producing spectacular water flows in the gorges. During summer, temperatures frequently top 40 degrees Celsius, ideal conditions for swimming in the gorge pools. Winter days are warm and clear but nights are cold and sometimes frosty.
**Bushwalks in the Pilbara**

For more detailed information on walks contact DEC’s Pilbara office.

**TRAIL GRADES**

- **Class 2**
  These walks are generally well marked with hard surfaced paths, and may have steps. No experience is required. Users are expected to exercise normal care regarding personal safety.

- **Class 3**
  Users require a moderate level of fitness. Trails may be slightly modified and may include a combination of steps, hard surfaced sections and unstable surfaces. Weather can affect safety.

- **Class 4**
  These distinct tracks are in relatively undisturbed natural environments. Trails are often rough with very little if any modification. A moderate to high level of fitness is required and weather can affect safety.

- **Class 5**
  Mostly indistinct trails through undisturbed natural environments. Terrain is rough. A high level of fitness is required. Users must be prepared and self-reliant, with advanced outdoor knowledge. Weather can affect safety.

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**Mount Bruce (Punurrunha)**

The second tallest peak in WA lies about 36 kilometres west of the park office. Here is a great opportunity to view the Marandoo Mine Site.

- **Marandoo View**
  500 metres – 30 minutes return
  Follow the path from the Mount Bruce car park to view the Marandoo Mine Site. Excavation of ore for overseas markets began in July 1994.

- **Honey Hakea Track**
  4.6 kilometres – 3 hours return
  From the car park at the base of Mount Bruce, take the path to Marandoo View. From here, follow the track to another vantage point further up the mountain. See the vegetation patterns of the mulga on the flats surrounding Mount Bruce.

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**Dales Gorge**

See the tranquil sunken gardens, deep segedge-fringed pools, and permanently cascading waterfalls.

- **Gorge Rim**
  2 kilometres – 1.5 hours return
  Follow the rim of the gorge between Circular Pool Lookout and the beginning of the Fortescue Falls Track. White barked snappy gums grow in the car park around the edge of the gorge and shady groves of native cypress gums grow in the car park around the edge of the gorge. As you take the steps down to the lookout, watch the view spread out in the distance. It’s spectacular in the early morning or late afternoon light.

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**Knox Lookout**

300 metres – 15 minutes return
As you take the steps down to the lookout, watch the view spread out in the distance. It’s spectacular in the early morning or late afternoon light.

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**Hancock and Weano Gorges**

Experience the spectacular views, precipitous cliffs and narrow passages. Banded iron rock formations tower over the valleys far below.

- **Oxer and Junction Pool Lookouts**
  800 metres – 30 minutes return
  From the Weano Recreational Area follow the trail to Junction Pool Lookout for breathtaking views into Hancock Gorge, 100 metres below you. If continuing to Oxer Lookout, please see below.

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**Kalamina Gorge**

This great introduction to the gorge system with its delightful trail and picnicking area.

- **Hancersley Gorge**
  This gorge has dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

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**Karijini Walk Trail Guide**

Helping you make the right choice.

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**Fern Pool**

Optional 300-metre detour from Fortescue Falls.

- **Circular Pool**
  800 metres – 2 hours return
  Follow the path from the car park, descending the steps down a steep slope to the bottom of the gorge. Ramble along the gorge floor to the fern-framed pool. Take a dip before re-tracing your steps.

- **Kalgoorlie Carp Pool**
  2 kilometres – 3 hours return
  Experience gorge wildlife at close quarters. Descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream, or stroll quietly beside the stream, covered with lemon-scented grass; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool.

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**Mount Bruce Summit**

9 kilometres – 6 hours return
Use the early morning hours to take the route that leads up the western face of the mountain, past Marandoo View. This challenging walk will reward you with spectacular views of the landscape.