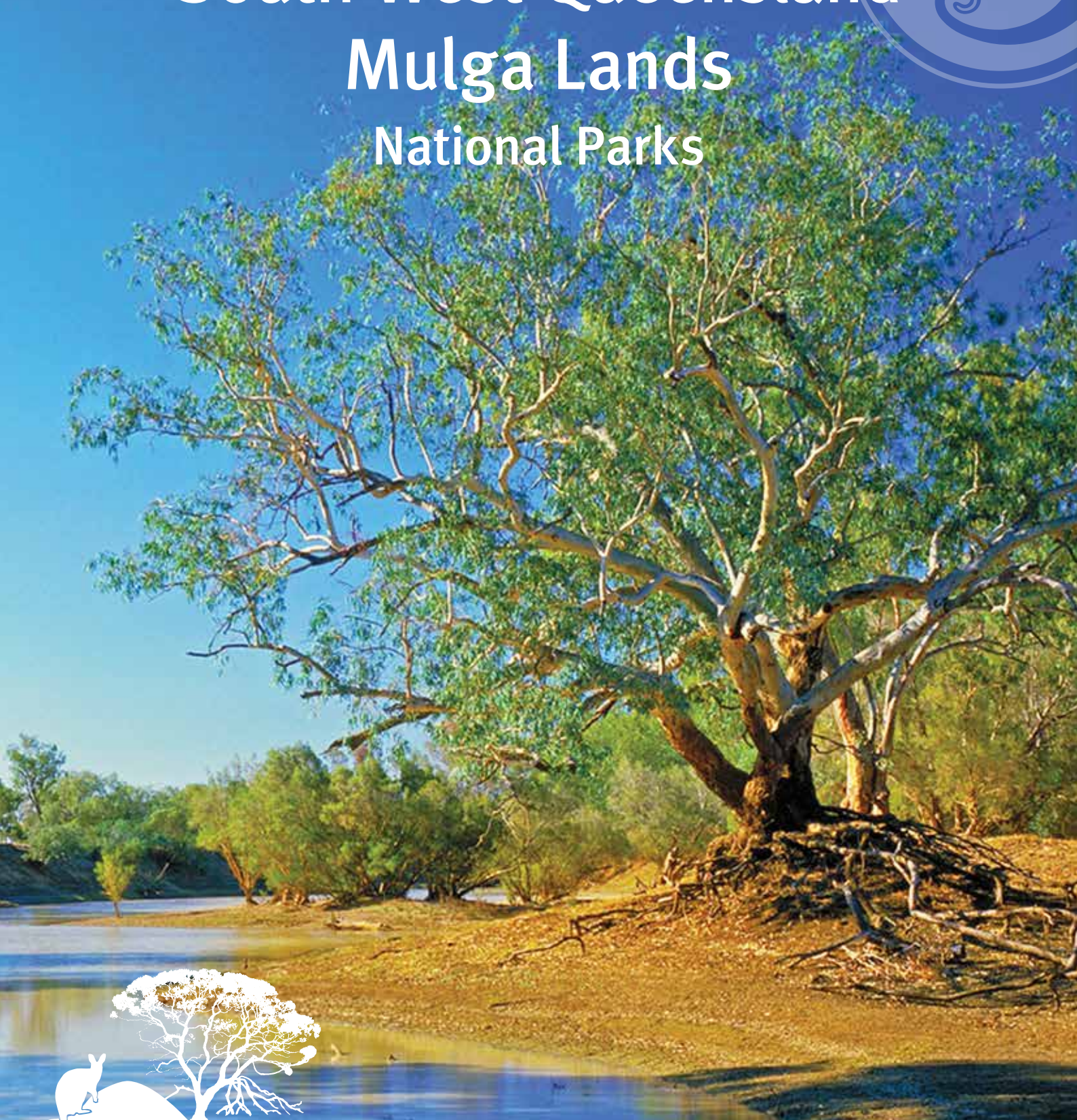
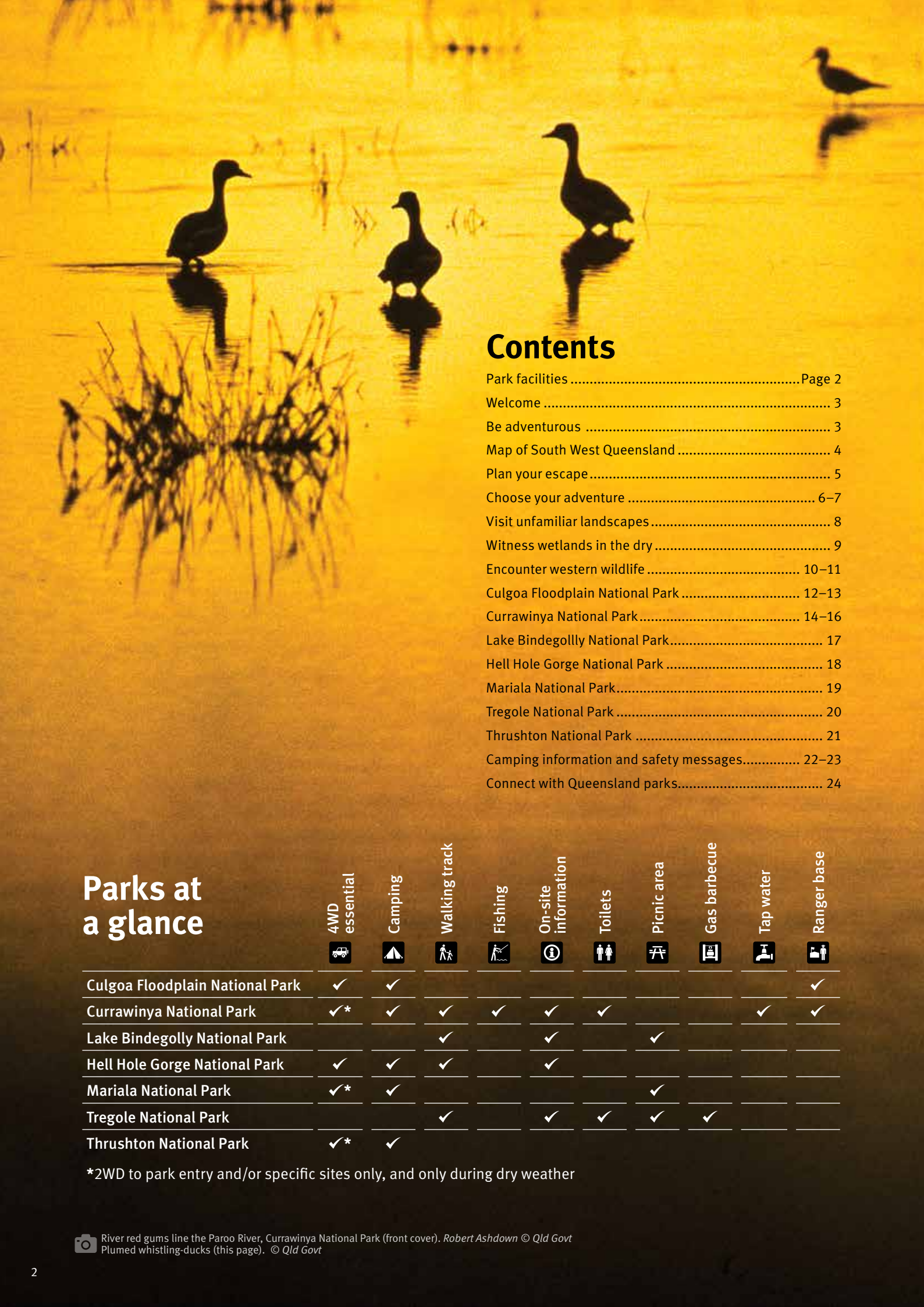




South West Queensland Mulga Lands National Parks







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Parks at a glance

| | 4WD essential  | Camping  | Walking track  | Fishing  | On-site information  | Toilets  | Picnic area  | Gas barbecue  | Tap water  | Ranger base  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Culgoa Floodplain National Park | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| Currawinya National Park | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Lake Bindegolly National Park | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Hell Hole Gorge National Park | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Mariala National Park | ✓* | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Tregole National Park | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Thrushton National Park | ✓* | ✓ | | | | | | | | |

*2WD to park entry and/or specific sites only, and only during dry weather



Welcome to

South West Queensland's Mulga Lands national parks

“ Those of us living and working out here treasure the harsh, rugged beauty and solitude of the Mulga Lands and know that you will too. Enjoy relaxing by a waterhole after a long drive; explore unique landscapes while discovering plants and animals not seen on the coast; meander through heritage sites and wonder about the harsh reality of life in the inland. Clear your mind of the everyday, and feel connected to the land in a way you'd never expect.

*Tony Mayo, Senior Ranger
On behalf of the Park Rangers
living and working in the Mulga Lands*



Expect the unexpected! Witness wetlands in the dry, colourful wildflowers brightening a scene of mulga-grey, and extraordinarily adapted plants and animals where you'd think little could survive.



Escape the everyday travelling long, often-dusty roads. Sleep under uninterrupted outback skies and savour solitude reflected in a waterhole or embers of a glowing campfire.



Become part of the Australian story. Connect with a timeless landscape where generations thrived despite isolation and cycles of boom or bust.

Release your inner nature lover. Encounter colourful parrots and bounding red kangaroos, reptiles in camouflage and burrowing frogs emerging after rain.

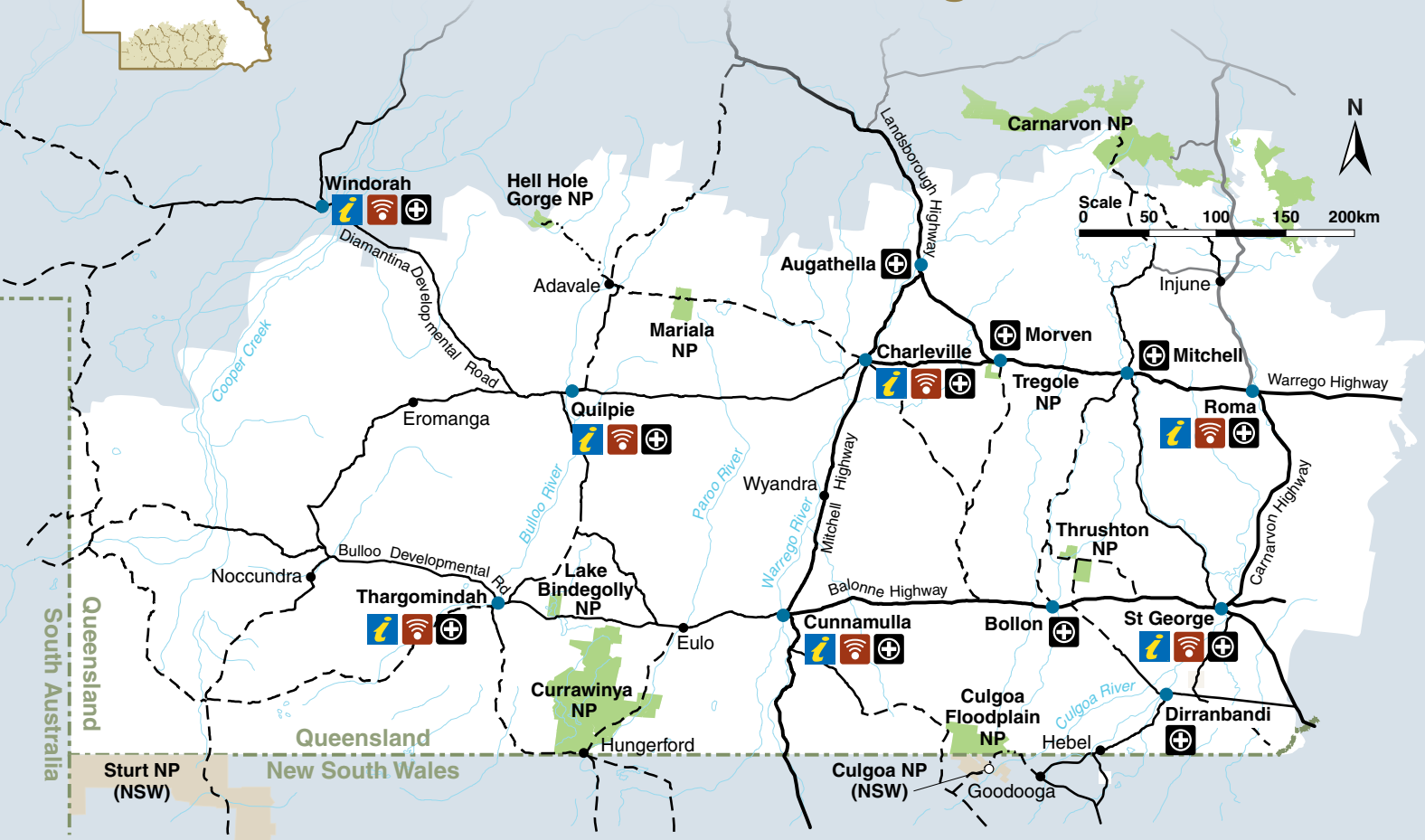


Wonder at the miracle of migratory waterbirds finding life-giving water in the vast, arid inland.



Photos: Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt; with the exception of the black swan (below right) © Qld Govt

Map of South West Queensland Mulga Lands



Legend

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| National park | State border | Telephone | Place of interest | Canoeing/kayaking |
| Waterways | Highway | Mobile phone coverage | Viewpoint | Wildlife spotting |
| Visitor information Centre (VIC) | Sealed road | Restaurant | Walking track | Cultural heritage |
| Wi-fi access | Unsealed road | Accommodation | 4WD track | Warning |
| Town | 4WD track | Hospital | Camping—car access | Warning—slippery rocks |
| Locality | Walking track | Toilets | Camping—4WD access | Warning—unstable cliff edges |
| Distance marker | Fence | Parking | Caravan | Warning—rapidly rising water |
| Mountain | Cliff line | Picnic table | Camper trailer | Diving prohibited |
| Gate | Park office | Shelter shed | Camper trailer—4WD access | Jumping from rocks prohibited |
| Grid | Information | Barbecue—fuel | Fishing | |

Track classification

| Grade | Suits | Track description |
|-------|-------------------------|---|
| 4 | Experienced bushwalkers | Rough track with many obstacles. Limited signage. Ankle supporting footwear required. |



Choose your adventure

Feel the freedom of wide open spaces surrounded by nature rather than crowds. Sleep under a million twinkling stars, reflect on times long-gone and spin a yarn by a glowing camp fire. South West Queensland's Mulga Lands are larger than life and full of surprises.

East of Charleville

Discover timbered treasures where the grey-hued Mulga Lands merge with the scrubby green Brigalow Belt.

Break your drive along the Warrego Highway at Morven with a short diversion south to **Tregole National Park**. Savour a shady picnic and stroll among endangered ooline—rainforest trees growing in the dry.


Another east-west route is the Balonne Highway leading to Cunnamulla via St George. Turn down back roads to **Thrushton National Park** to find solitude deep amid the mulga trees exploring heritage ruins on sandy country with no-one else in sight.

West of Charleville

Find weathered red ranges where mulga trees become shorter and more sparse.

Mariala National Park on the Charleville–Adavale Road offers views of distant ranges and surprisingly diverse plants on almost barren plateaus accessible only to 4WDs.

Well-equipped visitors to remote **Hell Hole Gorge National Park** are in for a surprise when stark red plateaus give way to dissected gorges, hidden waterholes and amazing wildlife.

 Emu chicks (below); yellow button daisies (right); pastoral era relics (above).

Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (below); Brett Roberts © Qld Govt (right and above)



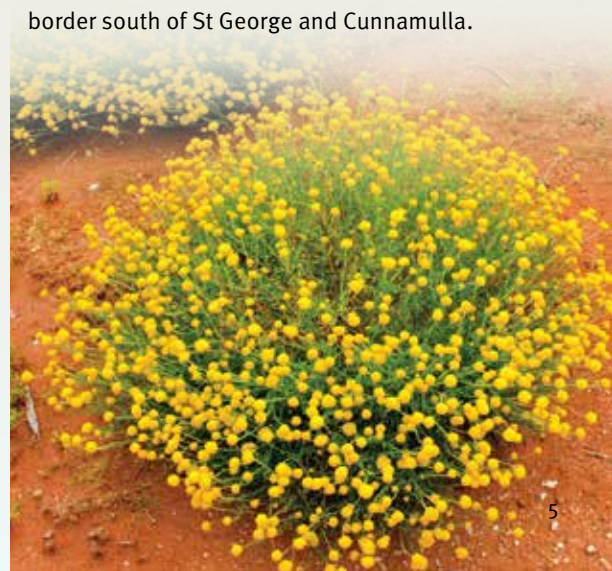
Down on the border

Relax by an outback river, watch birds at glistening wetlands and connect with the human history of these wide open spaces.

Break your drive along the Adventure Way east of Thargomindah at **Lake Bindigolly National Park**. Pause for a picnic and watch birds on a vast inland lake.

Currawinya National Park, near Hungerford on the border with New South Wales, is one of Queensland's largest national parks. Spend lazy days camping at the Paroo River, taking time to visit some of inland Australia's globally significant wetlands and delve into history and the cultural significance of Budjiti Country.

Well-equipped, independent campers with a 4WD will enjoy the ebb and flow of life on river floodplains at remote **Culgoa Floodplain National Park** on the Queensland–New South Wales border south of St George and Cunnamulla.





Relaxing by the Paroo River, Currawinya National Park

Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt

Plan your escape

Far from empty and inhospitable, the **Mulga Lands** are vibrant in colour, scenery and extraordinary life. Whether just off the bitumen, or far down red dirt roads into the unknown, enjoy unexpected discoveries and memorable moments in a vast, unmistakably Australian landscape.



Best time to visit

The cooler months (April to September) are the best time to visit. Winter mornings may drop to a frosty 0°C, but you'll avoid scorching summer days exceeding 40°C and the stormy season between December and March.

Rain can fall at any time of the year. Flooding can occur suddenly—even weeks after rain in catchments upstream. Many outback roads are unsealed and impassable after even a small amount of rain.

Remember mobile or internet phone coverage is extremely limited. Be well-prepared and stay well-informed of weather conditions as you travel.

Add some local flavour

It may be a long way between stops, but most towns along the way have supplies and colourful local characters. Stop in for country hospitality and helpful advice.

Catch local sights or time your holiday with a district event. Feel the buzz of a country show, race meeting, rodeo or spirited festival; stroll the local nature walk, take a heritage tour or linger over refreshments at an outback pub.

Learn about the night sky at Charleville's Cosmos Centre or meet one of Australia's most endangered mammals at The Bilby Experience. Travel the Natural Sciences Loop, dive down the Artesian Time Tunnel, mine for opals or bathe in an artesian spring. For information on guided tours, attractions and places to stay, visit outbackqueensland.com.au or queensland.com

Stories in the land

Places are more than scenery and nature—they are the people, sites, buildings and memories of all who travel, live and work there.

From artefact scatters, quarries and ceremonial sites to wells, fences and abandoned stations, landscapes contain reminders of those who came before.

Despite the harsh environment, Aboriginal people thrived here; the rich and varied landscape providing food, materials and opportunities to maintain a flourishing social, cultural, religious and economic lifestyle over thousands of years. Aboriginal sites along the Paroo River have been dated to 14,000 years ago; and connections continue today.

European exploration in the early nineteenth century was followed by settlers moving stock over thousands of kilometres to establish vast pastoral properties. Bullock-teams brought supplies and returned to the coast with wool and hides. Minerals were discovered and settlements grew into towns. National parks contain reminders of the fluctuating fortunes of those living in a challenging environment faced with droughts, floods, economic depression and the occasional good season.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service acknowledges First Nations people's connections to country and asks you to respect cultural artefacts, sites and landscapes.



📷 Sunset falls over Mariaula National Park (far left); A 4WD is needed to visit most parks in the Mulga Lands (left); Photos: Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt Splendid fairy-wren (above) © Bruce Thomson



© Bruce Thomson

Floodwater spreads out amongst the gidyea trees

Tune into the landscape

Get to know a special landscape, millions of years in the making.

An ancient basin

The Great Artesian Basin supplies reliable water from deep underground and underpins the region’s geological and pastoral history.

This basin formed when Australia’s centre sagged and filled with sediments from rivers and lakes, creating layers of porous, water-holding sandstone. Later, sea levels rose to create vast inland seas. Over time, sea-bed sediments compressed into bands of impermeable rocks trapping freshwater below.

Millions of years of weathering and erosion since have carved flat-topped hills (mesas) of hard, water-resistant rocks rising above a vast, wide landscape with occasional watercourses, shallow inland lakes and claypans. Here and there, water from the Great Artesian Basin forces to the surface as mound springs and soaks.

Changing climates

Outback Queensland has not always been a dry place. Lush rainforests once covered large areas, but with the onset of a cooler, drier climate about 30 million years ago, these were gradually replaced by grasslands and eucalypt forests, and seasonal dryness. Fire changed the vegetation.


Today’s climate zones, where northern and central Australia receives mainly summer rains, were only established 2.5 million years ago. Fluctuating climates have continued to shape the landscape. Today you see sand-ridge deserts, deeply weathered ranges, meandering river networks and arid-adapted plant communities.

Amazing Mulga Lands

Mulga’s silver-grey foliage and dark fissured bark contrast beautifully against deep red soils. Each mulga tree directs rain to its deep tap root, allowing survival in a dry climate.

Mulga trees are the conspicuous and dominant namesake of a bio-geographic (natural) region stretching from northern New South Wales and covering about 12 per cent of Queensland—mostly in the Murray-Darling Basin. Plains and low ranges are dominated by drought-tolerant mulga *Acacia aneura* which grows in almost pure stands or interspersed with grasslands and eucalypts. On deeper sandy soils ‘soft mulga’ grows as dense woodland, but, on shallow soils or hard residual ridges, ‘hard mulga’ is stunted and sparse.

Along creeks and rivers you’ll find coolabah, river red gums, black box or yapunyah. Smell the pungent aroma of gidyea *Acacia cambagei* across the plain when it rains.

 An active artesian spring (below); mulga trees (right).
Brett Roberts © Qld Govt (below);
Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (right)



Photos: (left) Brett Roberts © Qld Govt; (above) Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt; (right) © Bruce Thomson



Where there is water there is life

© John Augusteyn


Encounter western wildlife

Glimpsing iconic Australian animals is a huge part of any outback travel experience so it helps to know what you might encounter and where to look. Arid-zone creatures have developed remarkable adaptations and curious behaviours to cope with the heat and dry.

Marvellous macropods

Tick six species of kangaroos and wallabies off your list. Red kangaroos prefer more open areas in the west while eastern grey kangaroos are almost everywhere. At Currawinya, Lake Bindegolly or Culgoa Floodplain national parks, you might spot a western grey kangaroo. Swamp wallabies are small and live in dense scrub or close to creeks, while stocky and darker, common wallaroos frequent rugged or hilly country. Shy yellow-footed rock-wallabies hide in rugged cliffs around Mariala and Hell Hole Gorge.



 Adult male red kangaroos are red, females can be greyish-blue, but all have black and white facial markings (above); shingle-back skink (right); Major Mitchell's cockatoos favour the seeds of paddy melons growing in table drains, so be alert when driving (top right).

Bruce Thomson © Qld Govt (above); © Qld Govt (right); Raelene Neilson © Qld Govt (top right)

Rapt in reptiles

Wriggle at the sight of venomous eastern brown, western brown or king brown (mulga) snakes, but keep well away. It's rare to encounter woma pythons; carpet pythons are more common.

In warm weather you're bound to see a shingle-back skink moving slowly across a track—its head looking just like its tail. Spot a blue-tongued lizard opening its mouth wide to scare off potential predators. Highly camouflaged painted dragons are hard to spot on red sandy soil while tiny tessellated geckos shelter in soil cracks. Other intricately-patterned geckos live in trees. See tracks left behind by large sauntering lizards such as sand monitors and black-tailed monitors.



Fleeting feathers

Wake to a morning chorus of chattering mulga parrots and red-rumped parrots, carolling butcherbirds, squabbling honeyeaters and bickering babbler. The fluid, ringing song of the hard-to-spot crested bellbird is unmistakable.

Be enthralled as wheeling flights of budgerigars lift to the skies and tiny finches and fairy-wrens flit through the understorey. Admire birds of prey soaring across vast skies—whistling kites and black kites work up and down tree-lined watercourses in search of prey.

Surprisingly, thousands of waterbirds live in the arid interior, so be sure to keep a look out. At times thousands of black swans, pelicans, red-necked avocets, coots, silver gulls, Caspian terns and grebes can be seen. So too can pink-eared, hardhead, black and wood ducks, as well as the freckled duck—one of Queensland's most threatened waterbirds.

Just add water


Discover amazing water-dependant creatures right at home in the wetlands, waterholes and meandering creeks or rivers scattered through the dry.

South West Queensland's waterways are home to three species of turtles. Look for aptly-named eastern snake-necked turtles, and the shorter-necked Murray and Krefft's river turtles.

Spangled perch and bony bream are widespread in watercourses and lakes. But you'll only find golden perch (yellowbelly), silver perch, catfish and smaller, specialist species such as desert rainbow fish when and where conditions are right.


Be amazed after rain when thousands of shield shrimps hatch almost instantaneously from eggs lying dormant in the mud of claypans and swamps. Creek banks and floodplains also become noisy, wriggling places as a plethora of burrowing frogs emerge from buried fluid-filled 'cocoon' to feed and breed rapidly before it dries out again.



 (Clockwise from top left) Crucifix frogs are widespread but not often seen; red-winged parrot; stripe-faced dunnart; crazy-looking shield shrimps are arid zone crustaceans highly resistant to drying; enigmatic echidnas can be found almost anywhere at anytime.

Mark Weaver © Qld Govt (top left);
© Bruce Thomson (top centre and right);
Craig Eddie © Qld Govt (above)
Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (left).

Rangers' tip

 Birdwatching is best at dawn or dusk, whereas you'll see more reptiles when it is warm. In the heat of the day, mammals usually rest in the shade, in a crevice or down a burrow, so look for them late in the afternoon or at dusk. Keep an eye out for tell-tale tracks, scats or other signs where animals have been.

What wildlife where?

Mammals to watch for

Under the cover of darkness, mouse-like marsupials including dunnarts and planigales bound across the ground in search of spiders and insects. At Currawinya and Mariala national parks you might even be lucky enough to spot a kultarr.

Although far from common, you might see a brushtail possum or koala in eucalypt trees along meandering watercourses. Tiny sugar gliders have even been sighted at Culgoa Floodplain National Park. While relaxing by your camp at night in Culgoa Floodplain and Currawinya national parks, be sure to look up and catch a glimpse of an insectivorous bat—each park has at least 11 species.

Top twitching tips!

Keep your bird book and binoculars handy. Spectacular pink and white Major Mitchell's cockatoos are one of the Mulga Lands signature birds. Colourful mallee ring-necks, blue bonnets, mulga parrots and red-winged parrots are widespread, but you'll only spot Bourke's parrots in the west of the region. Pale-headed rosellas are found only as far west as Culgoa Floodplain, Thrushton and Tregole national parks, while blue-winged parrots are sometimes in the south at Currawinya, Lake Bindegolly and Culgoa Floodplain.

All six species of Australian woodswallows live in the Mulga Lands, as do all four babbblers. Babblers' gregarious nature and

squeaky chattering have earned them, and apostlebirds which are similar, the nickname 'happy families'.

At Currawinya, Hell Hole and Mariala national parks you might see a redthroat. These small grey birds favouring mulga, spinifex and saltbush are ground foragers that hop like mice.

Be on the lookout around wetlands and on the sandy plains at Currawinya, Lake Bindegolly and Culgoa Floodplain national parks for tiny but colourful crimson, orange or white-fronted chats; and for stunning male splendid and white-winged fairy-wrens. At Mariala, Tregole and Thrushton you might spot red-backed fairy-wrens.



Lake Wyara, Currawinya National Park

Adam Creed © Qld Govt

Witness wetlands in the dry

You don't expect to find water or waterbirds in the arid zone! Yet you'll see lakes, claypans, rivers and permanent waterholes that provide food, places to breed and dry season refuges. Time your visit to witness the spectacular explosion of life after it rains.

Visit some of inland Australia's richest and most diverse wetlands. Currawinya's Lakes Numalla and Wyara are particularly important—no other wetland complex in arid or southern Australia is thought to consistently support such large populations of waterbirds. In addition to lakes of all sizes and endangered artesian springs, the iconic Paroo River meanders through Currawinya. This 600 kilometre-long river is the last free-flowing river in the entire Murray-Darling basin. In wet times the river swells over a vast floodplain and adds to the water levels in Lake Numalla, but in the dry it is a string of disjointed waterholes.

A mere 80km away (as birds fly), salt and freshwater wetlands at Lake Bindegolly National Park join, in exceptionally wet years, to form a continuous body of water from north to south. And you barely have to step off the bitumen to see them.

Floods bring life to isolated wetlands and waterholes across the entire region. Experience the fluctuating fortunes of flood-dependant ecosystems at Culgoa Floodplain National Park further east and Hell Hole Gorge National Park to the north.

What waterbirds and where?

Even with binoculars, it might be hard to spot birds scattered over massive lakes and multiple wetlands. And at times there is little water to support any birds at all.

But when water arrives in the lakes, so do the birds—sometimes overnight. The first to arrive are attracted by tasty invertebrates such as shrimps, yabbies and insects which explode in numbers after rain. Then fish and aquatic plants develop. Different bird communities live on different lakes at different times. Some breed at one lake and fly to others to feed.

Smaller waders and plant-eating waterbirds feed on the aquatic vegetation, plankton and invertebrates in clear, salty waters such as Lake Wyara.

Shallows are home to sandpipers, godwits, snipes, rails, dotterels and stilts. Large waders (egrets, herons, ibis, plovers, spoonbills and brolga), fish-eating species and ducks prefer deeper, turbid (muddy) water like that of Lake Numalla. Fish-eating birds are the first to leave as lakes start to dry up.





Stretch your legs on a walk to Lake Bindegolly

Lake Bindegolly National Park

Must dos

- Wonder at the miracle of waterbirds finding resting, nesting and feeding refuges in the dry inland.
- Step out for a walk to the lake edge or bird hide.
- Admire a handsomely-gnarled *Acacia ammophila* tree—this is your best chance to see one.

Getting there

Pull off the sealed Bulloo Developmental Road (Adventure Way) 150km west of Cunnamulla (40km east of Thargomindah). To protect fragile lake margins from damage this park is walk-in only.

Places to stay

Stay overnight at Thargomindah. You can't camp in the park.

Did you know?

Acacia ammophila is a wattle listed as 'vulnerable' to extinction. From March to October (usually after rain) this attractive tree produces beautiful yellow 'puff-ball' flowers. Look for mulga parrots feeding on its seeds.



Acacia ammophila
© Viki Cramer

Slow to a stop and take it all in!

The glistening expanse into the distance may not be a mirage, but vast inland lakes and wetlands teeming with waterbirds.

After heavy rain, salt and freshwater lakes—Lakes Hutchinson, Toomaroo and Bindegolly—join to form a vast ribbon of water and vital wildlife refuge in the dry inland. Low-growing samphires (salt-tolerant plants that can survive in or out of water) trap sediments and nutrients at the lake edge. See woodlands of mulga, gidyea, other wattles and *Eremophila* growing on surrounding sand hills.

Things to do

Wildlife spotting

This surprisingly diverse park is home to about 200 species of birds, 80 other kinds of animals and 300 species of plants.

Take up a prime waterbird viewing position, the closest being a bird hide 100m west of the carpark. Amazingly, some of the park's 60 species of waterbirds appear almost overnight after water arrives, then leave again just as quickly when it dries. See black swans, ducks, terns, waders and other birds in large breeding flocks and maybe spot rare freckled ducks.

Away from the water, glimpse honeyeaters, fairy-wrens, parrots and soaring birds of prey.

Watch kangaroos coming to drink and tiny marsupials hiding among low-growing samphire plants.



Black swan

Reptiles are plentiful including tiny box-patterned geckos, skinks, painted dragons and sand goannas. Many of the 14 frog species recorded at the park can only be seen after rain.

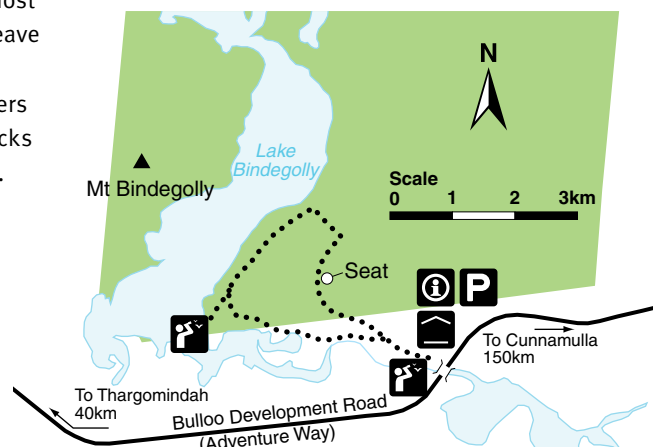
Picnicking

Discover why the park is special from signs in the shelter as you enjoy a picnic.

Walk the Lake Bindegolly Circuit

9.2km return (allow 3hr) Grade 4 track
Hike to an observation point at the lake edge then return via low, grass-covered sand hills.

Sections of the walking track may be covered by water when the lake is full. Sometimes the lake is completely dry.





Lake Numalla stretches for into the distance

Welcome to Budjiti Country

“ Our ancestors made the first human footprints on this land. We belong to this Country and it belongs to us. It is the resting place of our ancestors and the birthplace of our language, customs, traditions and practices.

Budjiti National Parks Working Group, 2020



Brett Roberts © Qld Govt

Currawinya National Park

Must dos

- Find peace at the Paroo River. Camp, paddle or just take it easy.
- Stroll Lake Numalla’s sandy shoreline or birdwatch over mesmerising Lake Wyara—full to the brim one visit, waterless another.
- Immerse yourself in a rich cultural landscape holding the stories, knowledge and places of spiritual significance to the Budjiti People.
- Reflect on the past! Imagine life on the land or the sounds and smells of a busy shearing shed.

Getting there

Currawinya is near Hungerford on the Queensland–New South Wales border.

From Cunnamulla (170km), drive 70km to Eulo, then 4km west and turn south towards Hungerford on the Queensland–New South Wales border. The final 97km to the park office takes 1.5 hours to drive.

From the south, the ranger base is 20km north of Hungerford, 217km north-west of Bourke.

A 4WD is recommended. Roads are unsealed and impassable when wet. After good rains (in the local area or far upstream), flooding isolates the park for long periods and can submerge camp sites.

Fuel is available at Hungerford. Supplies as well as fuel are at Eulo, Cunnamulla and Thargomindah (190km).

Follow dusty tracks to peaceful waterholes and the magnificence of massive inland lakes. Teeming wildlife, artesian springs, rich pastoral heritage and Budjiti cultural landscapes make Currawinya the ultimate outback destination.


Red sandplains and thick mulga scrubs give little hint of the lakes, rivers and wetlands of one of Australia’s most important inland waterbird habitats. At 344,000 hectares, Currawinya is one of Queensland’s largest national parks.

Sense the significance of two vast lakes at Currawinya’s heart—clear, salty Lake Wyara and freshwater Lake Numalla. Relax by the mighty Paroo River; this meandering ribbon of life is lined with coolabah, river red gum and yapunyah. Here and there on the sandy plains and foothills of low ranges you’ll find mound springs where underground water has pushed through the parched soil surface.

Did you know?

Currawinya National Park is a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention—an international agreement which encourages the conservation and wise use of such rich and diverse wetlands.

Currawinya is one of only five Ramsar sites in Queensland. Its wetlands regularly support up to 100,000 waterbirds. Being on an important inland route for migratory shore-birds, Currawinya hosts species listed under international migratory bird agreements. Read more about wetlands on page 10.

 River red gums line the Paroo River
Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt





Things to do

Wildlife spotting

Of Currawinya's 200 species of birds, 73 are waterbirds. See pelicans, black swans, gulls, ducks, stilts and small waders, spoonbills, egrets, ibis and brolga. Watch on land for Major Mitchell's cockatoos, mulga parrots, chestnut-crowned babbler, orange chats, spotted bowerbirds, white-plumed honeyeaters and splendid or white-winged fairy-wrens.

Along the river, whistling kites scoop up fish while rufous night-herons roost nearby. Water rats hunt at dawn or dusk, and pied bats skim for insects after dark.

See if you can distinguish a red kangaroo from an eastern or western grey kangaroo, or a wallaroo. Keep an eye out for emus, reptiles and birds of prey.

Currawinya has a small population of greater bilbies, reintroduced to a 25km² predator proof enclosure. You cannot visit the bilby fence, but can learn about these amazing creatures from displays

near the Currawinya Woolshed.

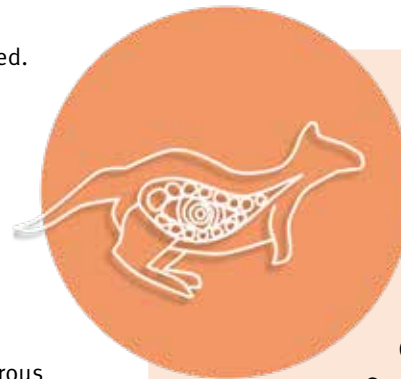
If you want to see a bilby, visit savethebilbyfund.com/charleville-bilby-experience for details.

Discover cultural heritage

Glimpse into the past, visiting the remains of numerous buildings and relics of a rich pastoral heritage prospering 'on the sheep's back'. Currawinya National Park encompasses several of the oldest pastoral properties on the Paroo River. Visit nearby Hungerford for a drink at The Royal Mail Hotel built in 1873.

Fishing and canoeing

The Paroo River is a great fishing spot. Enjoy a canoe, kayak and swim at waterholes or Lake Numalla; however motorised boats and jet skis are not permitted on any lake.



The Budjiti People are the first people of the Paroo River catchment, and Traditional Owners of

Currawinya and Lake Bindegolly national parks.

Budjiti Country is a cultural landscape of traditional camps and ceremony places, artefacts places, story places where spirits reside, and sensitive male-only and female-only places. Lives are intertwined with the river, the waterholes and many springs which continue to be vital sources of food and water and important spiritual and ceremonial places. Archaeological artefacts are evidence that people have lived at Currawinya for more than 14,000 years.



Places to camp

- 1 **Corni Paroo Waterhole,**
- 2 **Caiwarro Waterhole and**
- 3 **Pump Hole**



Take your pick from peaceful waterholes along the Paroo River, 40km north-east of the ranger base. Accessible to 2WD in dry weather only. Sites are subject to flooding. No facilities are provided.

- 6 **Ourimperee Waterhole**



Park your camper or roll out your swag near shady coolabahs and river red gums at the waterhole behind the Currawinya Woolshed, 5km south-east of the ranger base. Untreated water is available. Sites are subject to flooding.

- 11 **Myninya Waterhole**



Camp deep in the heart of Currawinya beside a semi-permanent wetland.

Places to go

- 4 **Old Caiwarro Homestead**

33km north-east of ranger base
Reflect on a bygone era at the ruins of a pastoral homestead complex established in 1891.

- 5 **Currawinya Woolshed**

4km south-east of ranger base
Imagine the sounds and smells of a busy shearing shed at this outstanding example of the intriguing outbuildings required to run a pastoral property.

Currawinya Lakes

85km return 4WD west of ranger base
Linger on the wide sandy shoreline of massive freshwater **Lake Numalla** 7. Admire the abundance of waterbirds and sheer size of **Lake Wyara** 8. Surrounded by low-growing samphire plants, this salt lake dries to a spectacular white saltpan during extended drought.

- 9 **The Granites**

15km north-west of ranger base
1.5km return walk (allow 40min)
Class 4 track
Stroll through mulga to the base of unexpected granite outcrops. Please respect the cultural significance of the area by not climbing on the granite rocks.

- 10 **Budjiti lookout**

44km north-west of ranger base
Walk 180m up a rocky slope to take in the sea of mulga stretching to the horizon.

- 12 **Werewilka Creek circuit**

28km return 4WD circuit from Myninya
Birds and hardy arid-zone plants are a highlight of this dry-weather-only drive past seasonal wetlands and claypans.

- 13 **Boorara Springs circuit**

97km return 4WD circuit drive
This rocky track from sandplains to low ranges reveals vegetated springs, muddy mound springs and salt-crustured soaks. Stop to explore pastoral era relics, take in views and spot wildlife.

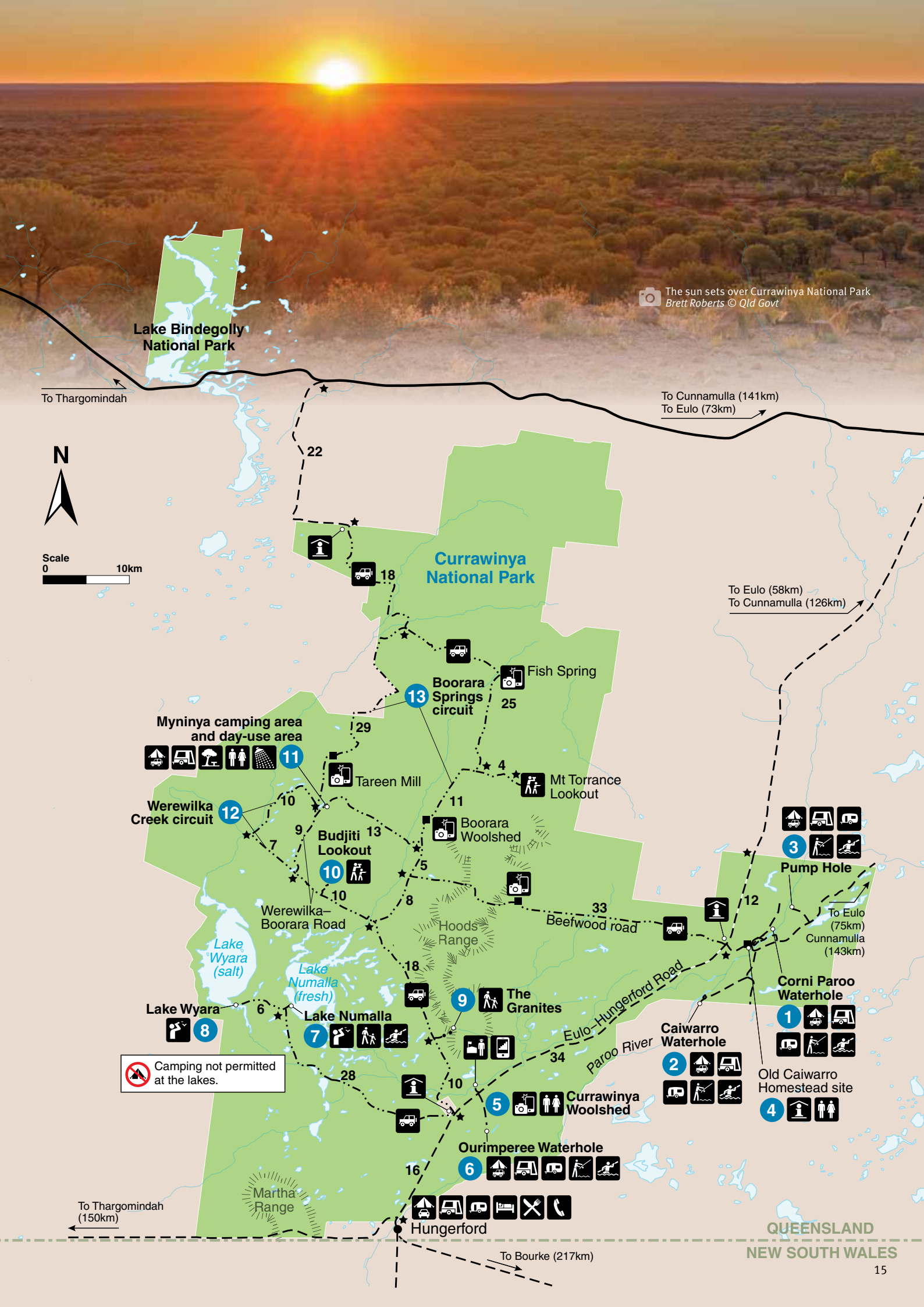


Staying safe

Plan well ahead and be prepared in case of stranding due to unexpected flooding or vehicle breakdowns (see hints on pages 22–23).

If venturing onto 4WD tracks inside the park you'll need a well-equipped vehicle, two spare tyres, extra fuel, experience in remote area travel and plenty of time.

Avoid setting up camp or sitting directly beneath river red gums and coolabahs as they can drop limbs without warning. Eucalypts, especially older trees, shed limbs to retain moisture within the rest of the tree. Horizontal limbs are the most likely to fall.



The sun sets over Currawinya National Park
Brett Roberts © Qld Govt

Lake Bindegolly National Park

To Thargomindah

To Cunnamulla (141km)
To Eulo (73km)



Scale
0 10km

Currawinya National Park

To Eulo (58km)
To Cunnamulla (126km)

Myninya camping area and day-use area



Werewilka Creek circuit



Lake Wyara

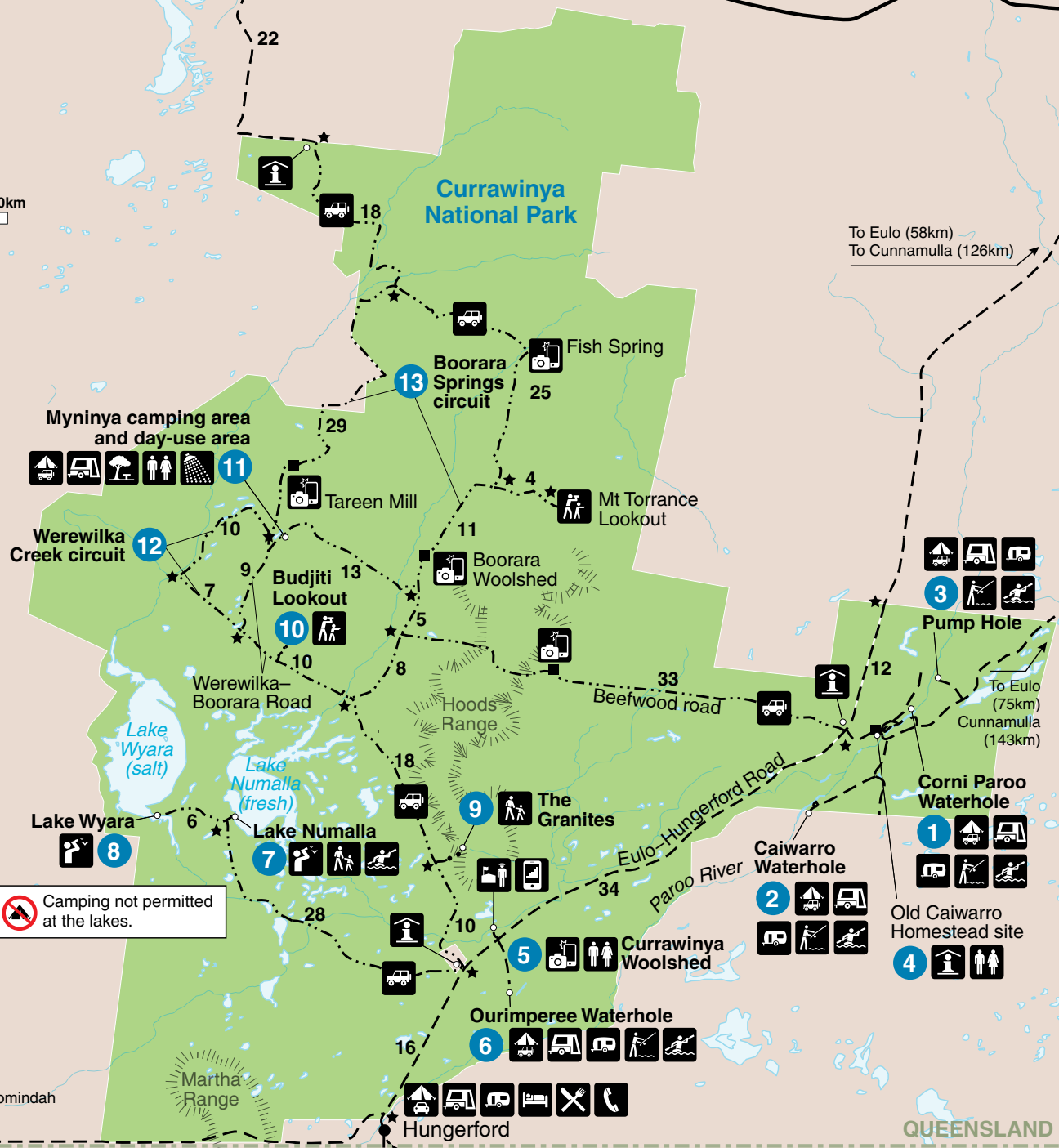


Camping not permitted at the lakes.

To Thargomindah (150km)

To Bourke (217km)

QUEENSLAND
NEW SOUTH WALES





Nebine Creek

Brett Roberts © Qld Govt

Culgoa Floodplain National Park

Must dos

- Watch wildlife taking respite from the dry at semi-permanent waterholes, creeks and wetlands.
- Tick all six species of Australia's woodswallows, colourful parrots and the vulnerable painted honeyeater off your must-see list.
- Imagine the stories behind the rusty iron and bush timber of Hillview Homestead, Redbank Hut and old wells, fences, yards and the many pastoral-era relics.

Getting there

Travel 160km south from St George (66km from Dirranbandi) to Hebel, then 45km to Goodooga on sealed roads. Turn right into Brenda Road, travel 23km, take the left fork onto Byra Road and travel 7km to the park.

From Cunnamulla, travel east 3km along the Balonne Highway and turn right onto the Mitchell Highway. Travel 29km and turn left onto Jobs Gate Road and travel 90km to the park.

A 4WD is essential. All roads are unsealed and become impassable after rain.

The nearest fuel and supplies are at Dirranbandi (130km).

Go with the flow—linger at waterholes watching wildlife or at heritage sites scattered across lightly timbered plains and stony ridges, sometimes isolated for long periods by floodwaters.

Coolabahs, black box and grasses flourish on the floodplain. Brigalow and gidyea grow across the flat plains with mulga and western bloodwood found on red earth and stony ridges.

Stone tool scatters and cooking sites remind visitors that First Nations people have a long association with this landscape. Visit relics of our pastoral past scattered throughout the park.



Staying safe

Plan well ahead and be prepared in case you get stranded due to unexpected flooding or vehicle breakdowns (see pages 22–23).

Things to do

Wildlife spotting

Take your binoculars to this birdwatching haven with more than 150 species of birds. Be enthralled by waterbirds finding refuge at waterholes; spot red-winged, mulga and red-rumped parrots and at least ten species of honeyeaters.

After rain, listen or look for elusive water-holding frogs and other burrowing frogs including the vulnerable rough collared frog. Watch at night for dunnarts and planigales hunting for an insect meal. On a warm day you might spot a yakka skink—a threatened reptile living in logs or burrows made by other animals in deep sandy soils.



Places to camp

- 1 Byra Lagoon and
- 4 Nebine Creek



Settle under shady coolabahs beside seasonal waterholes where wildlife gather.

- 2 Redbank Hut



Camp near an old hut, 12km from the ranger base.

Camp sites are accessible to high-clearance off-road camper trailers, but not caravans and buses. Be self-sufficient as no facilities are provided.

Places to go

- 1 Byra Lagoon

Kick back in your camp chair while keeping an eye on waterbirds and other wildlife.

- 2 Redbank Hut and
- 3 Hillview Homestead

Step back in time visiting relics of days gone by.

- 5 Tego Springs

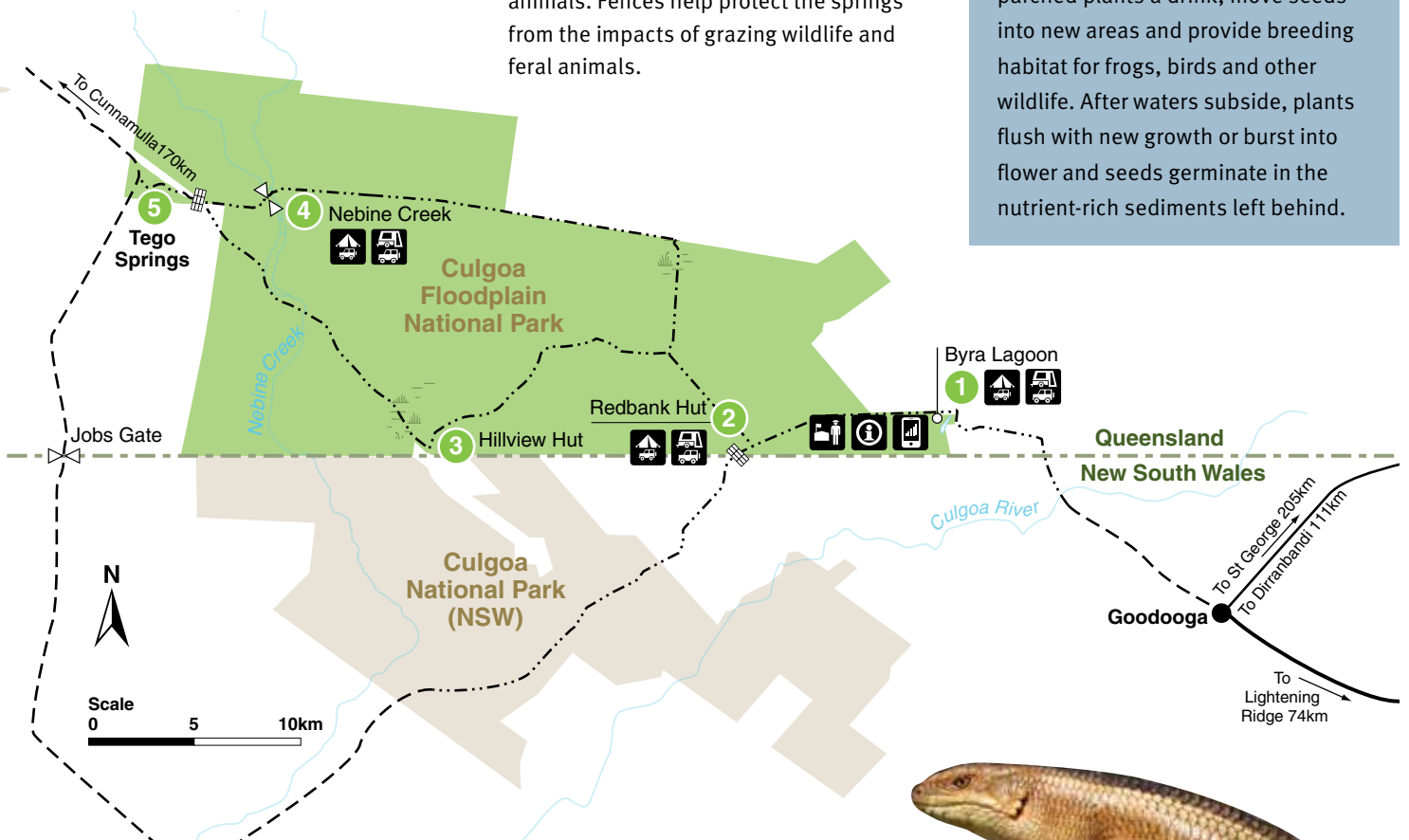
See water flowing naturally from the Great Artesian Basin into open pools. Because artesian springs are isolated from one another, they each nourish unique communities of plants and animals. Fences help protect the springs from the impacts of grazing wildlife and feral animals.



Briony Masters © Qld Govt

Did you know?

While floods can bring disaster, they also bring life. Floodwaters spread out to cover the floodplain and fill wetlands and waterholes. They give parched plants a drink, move seeds into new areas and provide breeding habitat for frogs, birds and other wildlife. After waters subside, plants flush with new growth or burst into flower and seeds germinate in the nutrient-rich sediments left behind.



📷 Royal spoonbill (opposite page); Redbank Hut (far left); canegrass swamp at Culgoosa Floodplain (left) yakka skink (above).

© Qld Govt (far left and opposite page); Craig Eddie © Qld Govt (left); © Boobook (above)



Hell Hole Waterhole

© Qld Govt

Hell Hole Gorge National Park

Must dos

- Peer into the depths at Hell Hole or Spencers waterholes or be mesmerised by swirling eddies of a washpool.
- Venture deep into weathered gorges or up rugged escarpments for views of surrounding plains.
- Glimpse secretive yellow-footed rock-wallabies bounding effortlessly up rocky ridges or watch raucous red-tailed black cockatoos in trees along the creek.

Getting there

Hell Hole Gorge National Park is 69km from Adavale.

Head west from Charleville or north from Quilpie to Adavale, then take the Adavale–Blackall Road. Turn left and follow the Milo–Gooyea Road to the park. The road leading to Hell Hole Gorge is well signposted.

A 4WD is essential. Roads are unsealed and become impassable when wet; be prepared for stranding due to wet weather. Take care to avoid stock on unfenced roads and leave gates as you find them.

The nearest fuel and supplies are at Charleville (256km) and Quilpie (189km).

Staying safe

Supervise children closely



Submerged objects, steep, slippery banks, and poor visibility in muddy water make swimming, jumping and diving unsafe. Only confident swimmers should swim. Never dive or jump into the water. Never swim when creeks are in flood.



Cliff edges may be unstable. Keep well back from the edge.

Escape deep into weathered gorges to discover unexpected waterholes and curious creatures hidden beneath a rim of rugged escarpments giving views to the horizon.

With its steep rocky banks and cascades that run after heavy rain, Hell Hole Waterhole is the park's main attraction. Venture along deeply-incised creeks, marvelling at 45m high cliffs and the life sustained by seasonally-flowing waters.

Things to do

Wildlife spotting

Keep an eye out for spinifex pigeons—they're at the south-eastern limit of their distribution here. Watch snakes and lizards laze in the sun then slide into shady crevices. See Krefft's river turtles dip under the surface when disturbed.

Discover wildflowers blooming in spring among sparse, stunted mulga along the rocky plateau.



Homolocalyx sp.3
Tracy Waltz © Qld Govt

Walking

Explore around waterholes, into gullies and along the deceptively rugged plateau.

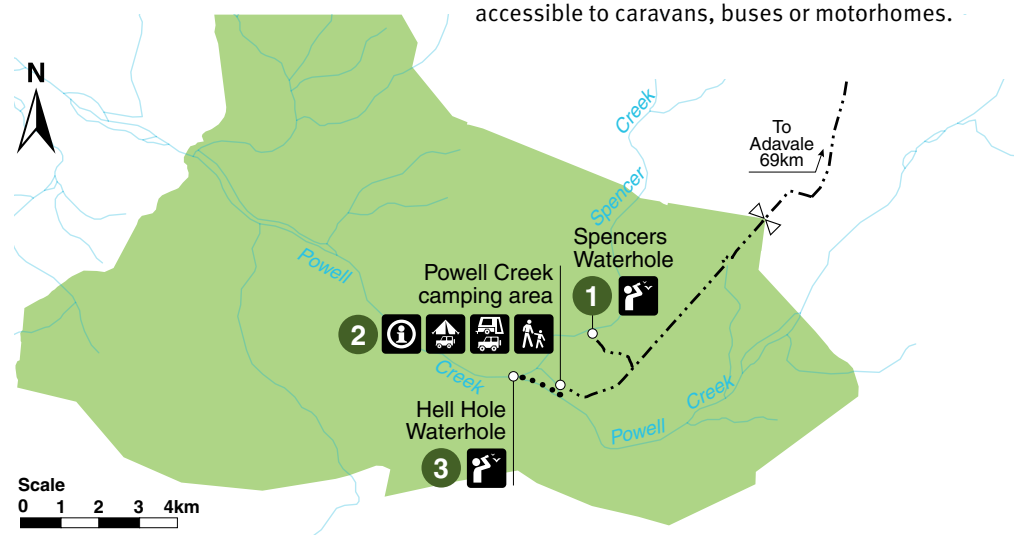
The only formed track is a 1.5km return (Grade 4) hike to magnificent Hell Hole Waterhole ③. From cliffs overlooking Spencers Waterhole ① you can enjoy views or wander along the escarpment glimpsing wildlife in the cool gorges below.

Be extremely careful around cliff edges. Beware slippery creek banks and the potential for water to rise rapidly.

Places to camp

② Powell Creek

Camp overlooking the gorges and smooth rock holes of Powell Creek. This park is not accessible to caravans, buses or motorhomes.



Range Tank is a reminder of Mariala's pastoral-era

Mariala National Park

Experience the hidden beauty and solitude of the often dry, but far from lifeless, rangelands clothed in uniform mulga grey.

Must dos

- Gaze over rocky ridges towards distant ranges where secretive yellow-footed rock-wallabies hide.
- Be fascinated by cryptically patterned reptiles, colourful parrots and delicate wildflowers contrasting against uniform grey mulga and red, sandy soils.

Getting there

Mariala is on the Charleville–Adavale Road 128km west of Charleville (59km east of Adavale). The road dissects the park with entry points well signposted from the Charleville side.

A 4WD is recommended. Roads are unsealed and impassable in wet weather.

Did you know?

In the early 1900s horses were bred here for use by the Cobb and Co. coachline.

Formerly part of Ambathalla holding, but never extensively grazed or cleared, Mariala became a nature reference site for studying long-term vegetation changes. In 1982 it became a scientific reserve (the first protected area in Queensland's Mulga Lands) then a national park in 1992.

'Soft mulga' grows on deep red soils in the park's east. But on the ranges and shallow soils 'hard mulga' rarely grows above four metres in height and flowering shrubs cling to life in shallow, infertile soils.

Of interest to nature-lovers is *Dodonoa intricata* which grows on a barren plateau in a sparse, stunted shrubland of *Acacia stowardi*, *Hakea collina* and *Calytrix tetragona*. It is unusual to see poplar box, brigalow and red ash growing so far west.

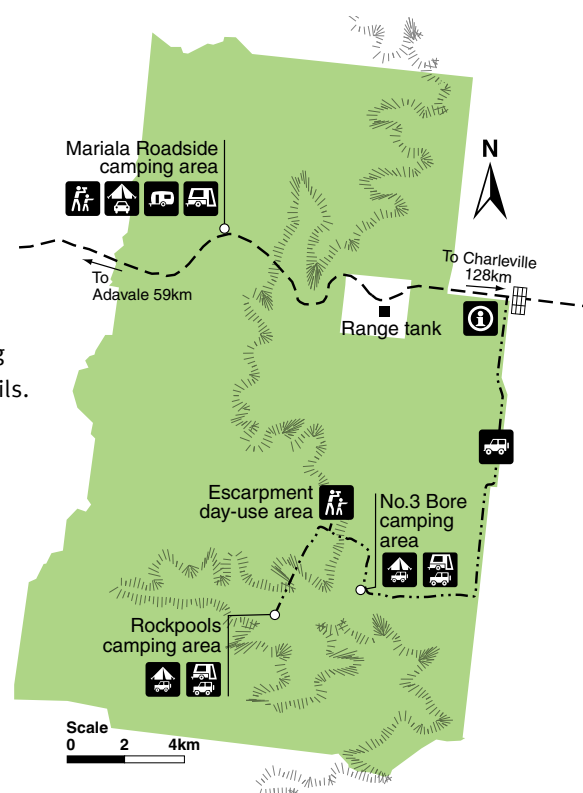
Things to do

Wildlife spotting

Keep an eye out for some of Mariala's 140 species of birds, 26 reptiles, 10 frogs and 27 mammals. See bar-shouldered doves, sulphur-crested cockatoos, speckled warblers, pied currawongs, rare square-tailed kites and koalas at the limits of their usual range.

Hardy arid-zone plants are fascinating. Admire *Euphorbia sarcostemmoides*, *Thryptomene hexandra*, *Ptilotus remotiflorus* and *Acacia maranoensis*. Bowyakka *A. microsperma*, is not common in other parks and Mariala also protects a rare hakea found only in this district.

Yellow-footed rock-wallabies
Bruce Thomson © Qld Govt 



Places to camp



Set up camp adjacent to the Charleville–Adavale Road or at your choice of two small camping areas deep inside the park. There are no facilities.



Staying safe

Cliff edges are unstable. Keep well back from the edge and supervise children closely.



Explore Tregole on foot

Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt

Tregole National Park

Must dos

- Stretch your legs on a short bush circuit where you'll learn to tell ooline from mulga, brigalow from belah and bitterbark from fuchsia bush.
- Savour a bush barbecue or peaceful picnic with the birds.

Getting there

Turn south off the Warrego Highway at Morven and follow the sealed but narrow road 11km to the Tregole day-use area.

Did you know?

Ooline *Cadellia pentastylis* has rainforest origins dating back to the Ice Ages when most of Australia was wetter than it is today. The ooline forest at Tregole is unusual given such a hot, dry climate. Once more common further east, ooline is now considered as vulnerable to extinction due to clearing over much of its former range.



Be surprised by almost pure stands of ooline—rainforest trees with prehistoric origins growing in the hot, semi-arid inland.

Discover the variety of plant and animal life where two biogeographic regions meet—the Brigalow Belt and the Mulga Lands. Mulga clothes Tregole's ridges; brigalow grows on areas with heavy clay soils; while woodlands of poplar box and Mitchell grasslands are found on the park's undulating plains.

Things to do

Picnicking

Cook lunch on the barbecue or picnic under a shady tree.


Wildlife spotting

Grab your binoculars and camera and go birdwatching. Spot brown or white treecreepers working busily prising insects from underneath bark, and see weebills, warblers, five different species of thornbills or numerous other 'little brown birds'. Caper white butterflies flit from one wild orange bush to another while sand goannas prowl for an easy meal.

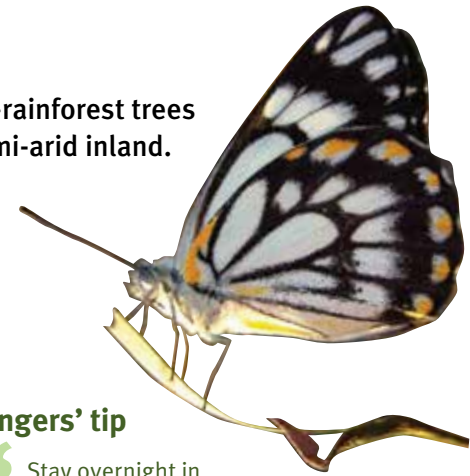
Learn about Tregole's plants and animals from displays at the day-use area.

Walk the Ooline circuit

2.5km return (allow 45min). Grade 4 track Weave through stands of ooline and mulga, spot birds and identify different plants using signs along the track. Beautiful black orchids growing abundantly on tree trunks attract many insects when in bloom. These flowers are rarely seen so far west.

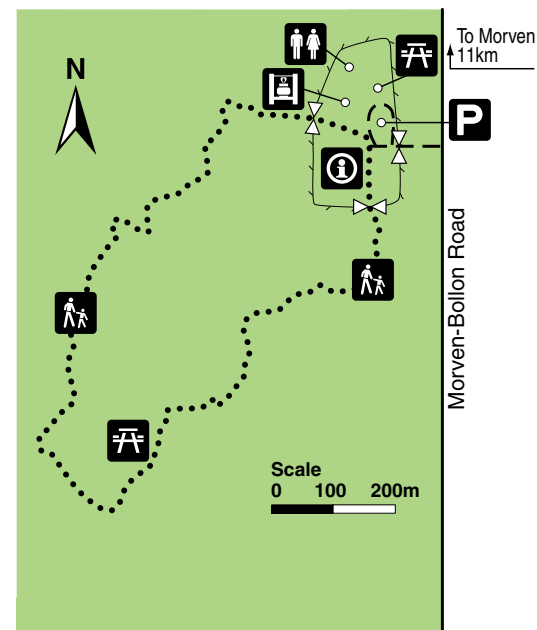
 Ooline is an attractive tree with tessellated bark (left); enjoy a picnic in the bush (right); caper white butterfly (above).

Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (left); Brett Roberts © Qld Govt (right); © Qld Museum (above)



Rangers' tip

Stay overnight in Morven, Mitchell or Charleville. Camping is not permitted at Tregole.



Thrushton National Park bursts into flower after rain

Thrushton National Park

Must dos

- Capture contrasting colours of wildflowers in spring and bright-green spinifex against red sand.
- Wander the homestead, woolshed and stockyard ruins imagining the bustle of a working pastoral property in years gone by.

Getting there

Thrushton is best accessed from Bollon via the Mitchell–Bollon Road. Turn onto Homeboin–St George Road 51km north of Bollon (or 156km south of Mitchell) and continue east for 16km to the park.

From St George, head west along the Balonne Highway for 51km, turning north at Boolba onto Cypress Tank Road. Drive for 36km, turn left into Rutherglen Road, then travel a further 15km to the park entrance.

A 4WD is recommended. Roads are unsealed and impassable in wet weather. Please leave all gates as you find them.

Disappear down backroads deep into the mulga scrub in search of solitude, pastoral heritage relics, colourful wildflowers in spring and the unusual sight of spinifex so far east.

Get to know this park with flat, sandy plains containing extensive stands of mulga, a rare sub species of belah and scattered ironbark, cypress pine and kurrajong growing above areas of spinifex.

Things to do

Wildlife spotting

Search for koalas and echidnas amid river red gums and coolabahs lining Neabul Creek. Keep watch for rare square-tailed kites and if lucky, see the golden whistler and delicate mouse at the south-western limit of their range.

Spot a ‘western’ skink or snake! Tiny *Ctenotus brachyonyx* and *C. schomburgkii* skinks are usually seen further west, as is the woma—a large ground-dwelling python. Glimpse rare yakka skinks perched on sunny logs.

Walking

Wander creeklines, around building ruins or along a bush track. There are no designated walking tracks so use a compass or GPS and be mindful of your location. It’s easy to become disorientated in the thick vegetation and flat terrain.

Rangers’ tip

“Never attempt to cross bore drains in your vehicle. These open drains directed water to where it was needed but stopped flowing in 2007 when bores were capped as part of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative.

Places to camp

1 Thrushton Homestead



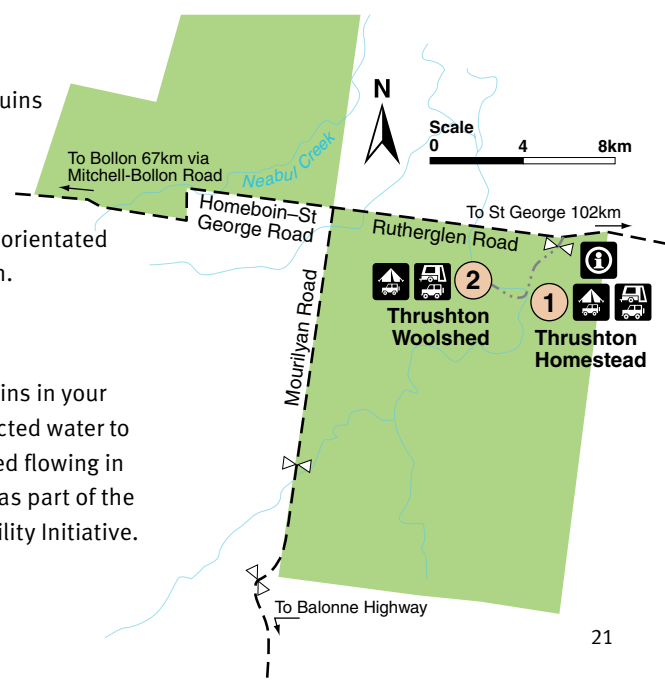
Camp 3km from the park entrance in an open, flat area near the old Thrushton Homestead. This building was originally part of the Dunkeld Inn and moved here in 1921 on carts drawn by 40 horses.

2 Thrushton Woolshed



Enjoy a peaceful bush camp near the old woolshed, 2km past the homestead site.

Camp sites are accessible to 4WD only in dry weather. There are no facilities.





Roads through the Mulga Lands can be long and dusty

Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt

Be prepared

Enjoy vast horizons and the freedom of being out of phone contact—but don't take the outback for granted. Be self-sufficient and well prepared so you are not left stranded due to a breakdown or unexpected rain.

- Pack for hot and cold conditions, and flies! It can be very hot during the day and cold overnight. Bring fly veils, insect repellent and insect-proof camping gear.
- Expect rough, slow, dusty and/or boggy roads far from help should something go wrong. Many parks are only accessible in a 4WD.
- Choose your destination carefully. Are you, your vehicle and equipment up to it? Do you have remote travel experience and sound mechanical knowledge of your vehicle? Consider travelling with another vehicle.
- Fuel up regularly. 4WD travel and low gear uses fuel more quickly. Fuel stops are few and far between.
- Plan for emergencies. Pack extra supplies and leave an itinerary (including travel routes and check-in points) with a friend or relative.
- Avoid rushing. Allow for delays and take your time to appreciate all this vast region offers.

Communication

Mobile phone and internet coverage is generally not available, although some networks may have service in major towns. Carry a satellite phone or UHF radio you can use to contact support or emergency services should the need arise—see back cover for useful contacts. A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is also advisable for travel in remote areas.

Camping in parks

To camp in national parks you need a camping permit. Book your camp sites and obtain camping permits online before you go at qld.gov.au/Camping

Stop for local advice at a friendly visitor information centre along the way. Many offer free Wi-Fi which can be used for checking park alerts and making camping bookings. For accommodation options outside national parks visit Outback Tourism at outbackqueensland.com.au or queensland.com.

Stay informed

Regularly check:

- park alerts at qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts for park conditions and closures.
- current and forecast weather conditions and river heights at bom.gov.au
- travel and road condition information at qldtraffic.qld.gov.au or phone 13 19 40.

Packing checklist

- Adequate water, food and emergency supplies. Carry at least 7 litres of water per person per day (for drinking, cooking and limited washing) plus an extra emergency supply for 3–4 days in case of stranding.
- Complete first-aid kit. Include sun and insect protection and medications.
- Detailed map showing travel routes and distances. A GPS may be useful.
- Communication equipment and list of emergency contacts.
- Sufficient fuel, vehicle spares and repair equipment. Have extra tyres, fuel, oil, engine coolant and vehicle retrieval equipment if travelling to remote areas.
- Reliable camping gear in good working order.
- Portable stove and/or clean, weed-free firewood.
- Sturdy rubbish bags and sealable, animal-proof containers. No bins are provided.



Nothing beats camping beside an outback waterhole. Raelene Neilson © Qld Govt

Fishing

Fishing is only permitted at Currawinya National Park. Regulations apply, for details see parks.des.qld.gov.au/things-to-do/activities/fishing

Drive safely

- Drive according to the speed limit and local conditions. Unsealed roads may have gutters, washouts or loose edges and dust decreases visibility. Always watch out for livestock and wildlife.
- Keep to designated roads to help prevent erosion, protect vegetation and avoid the confusion of multiple tracks. Plants here are slow to regrow.
- Be considerate of other road users and local land holders. Leave gates as you find them and never drive on private property without permission. Some maps show roads not open to the public.
- Avoid driving on rain-affected roads. Even if you get through you could damage the road surface and make it dangerous for other road users.
- If you break down, ALWAYS stay with your vehicle until help arrives.




Flood warning

After good rains (in local areas or far upstream) flooding can cut roads and leave parks or townships isolated for long periods. Be ready to sit tight if it rains.

- Check for closures before travelling.
- Obey all road closures—roads may be closed due to boggy conditions or water over the road.
- Avoid flooded crossings as submerged obstacles and washouts may pose a hazard.

If it's flooded—forget it!

 Curgoa Floodplain sometimes lives up to its name. © Qld Govt



Watch wildlife, don't hit it!

Vehicles share the road with wildlife. Minimise your chance of collision and vehicle damage by travelling at or below the speed limit. Avoid driving at dusk or dawn when wildlife are most active.

Slow down for wedge-tailed eagles feeding on road-kill—they need time to lift their huge bulk off the ground. Watch for emus, kangaroos and livestock, and for reptiles basking on sunny road surfaces.


Photo: Shane Hume © Qld Govt

Be responsible

- Avoid disturbing animals and plants, cultural artefacts and historic sites.
- Leave your pets at home.
- Please don't feed wildlife or leave food or scraps behind.
- Take your rubbish away with you. Never bury rubbish as animals will dig it up.
- Please don't place rubbish or contents of chemical toilet tanks into pit toilets.
- Avoid the spread of weeds and pests. Use vehicle wash-down facilities in local towns. Check clothing and equipment regularly: wrap weed seeds and plant material and dispose with your rubbish.
- Don't use firearms, chainsaws, quad bikes or unregistered motor cycles.
- Use a portable stove or your own clean, weed-free firewood. Collecting firewood in national parks is not permitted. Use fire rings where provided.
- Wash at least 50m away from waterbodies and minimise use of soap and detergent.
- Where toilets are not provided, bury human waste and toilet paper at least 15cm deep and 100m away from camp sites, tracks and watercourses.

Be safe

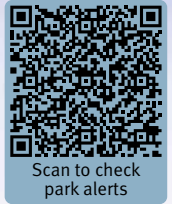
- **In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000).**
- Always carry drinking water, whether driving or walking. Boil, filter or treat water from any source.
- Wear protective clothing. Put on a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and sturdy footwear (not thongs).
- Supervise children at all times.
- Watch your step and stay away from escarpment edges. They might be unstable.
- Check water conditions before swimming. Never jump or dive into the water as it may be shallow or hide submerged objects. Never swim alone or when a creek is in flood.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and on the lookout for animals that could scratch, sting or bite.
- If you encounter a snake, back away to a safe distance and allow it to move off. Never pick up, disturb or try to kill a snake.

 Remember to pack your binoculars.
Karen Smith © Qld Govt



Further information

-  qld.gov.au/NationalParks
-  qld.gov.au/Camping
-  qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts
(access, closures and conditions)
-  [qldnationalparks](https://www.facebook.com/qldnationalparks)
-  [@QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks); [#QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks)



This brochure is also available
online at qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures

Useful contacts

Local information on roads, waste disposal sites and local services:

Balonne Shire phone (07) 4620 8888 www.balonne.qld.gov.au

Bulloo Shire phone (07) 4621 8000 www.bulloo.qld.gov.au

Murweh Shire phone (07) 4656 8355 www.murweh.qld.gov.au

Paroo Shire phone (07) 4655 8400 www.paroo.qld.gov.au

Quilpie Shire phone (07) 4656 0500 www.quilpie.qld.gov.au

Road conditions:

Visit the Department of Transport and Main Roads
at qldtraffic.qld.gov.au or phone 13 19 40.

Emergencies:

Call Triple Zero (000) from a digital or satellite mobile phone.
Mobile phone coverage is extremely limited.

For non life-threatening emergencies you can also try to make
contact via UHF radio—scan for people using other channels
while you are driving.

Tourism information:

outbackqueensland.com.au or queensland.com

Toilet waste dump points:

Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia cmca.net.au