

Porongurup National Park



Plan ahead and prepare

Your safety in natural areas is our concern but your responsibility.

Please heed warnings shown on signs that display this symbol.



Slippery, rough and uneven surfaces – Wet rocks can be extremely slippery. Granite surfaces can cause serious scrapes to skin. Uneven and sloping surfaces exist throughout the park.

Carry drinking water – Two to three litres per person for half to full day walks.

Be prepared for sudden changes in the weather. Wear boots or sturdy footwear, weatherproof clothing and sun protection.

Protect habitat – Avoid stepping on plants. Do not cut walking sticks, pick wildflowers or move rocks.

Fox baits – Poisonous 1080 baits are spread throughout the park four times a year by hand and aircraft drop. The baits are small chunks of dried meat or pink sausages that should not be handled.

Take rubbish out with you, including food scraps and toilet paper. Make sure toilet waste is buried to 15 centimetres deep.



Falling branches – Eucalypt trees, especially karri, can shed branches at any time. Be extra aware on windy days.

For more information

DEC officers are always willing to help. Don't hesitate to contact them for information.

Porongurup National Park

RMB 1310

Bolganup Road

Mount Barker WA 6324

Tel (08) 9853 1095

South Coast Regional Office

120 Albany Highway

Albany WA 6330

Tel (08) 9842 4500

DEC State Headquarters

17 Dick Perry Avenue

Kensington WA 6151

Tel (08) 9334 0333

Information and recreational guide



Department of
Environment and Conservation



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Information current at July 2009

The Porongurup Range

The 12-kilometre long Porongurup Range lies 48 kilometres north of Albany, approximately halfway to the Stirling Range. At 670 metres high, Devil's Slide is the highest of the Porongurup's round-topped peaks.

The range's distinctive granite domes are the remains of the ancient Porongurup pluton, a massive bubble of molten rock that rose from deep in the Earth's core and pushed upwards into the overlying base rock of the continent.

Over millions of years the softer rock lying above the pluton weathered away to expose the giant granite mass. Changes in temperature and in the weight of the overlying rock caused the granite to fracture.

The relentless natural forces of sun, rain and wind wore away the square edges of the fractures, slowly sculpting the exposed pluton into the rounded shapes and deeply incised valleys that exist today.

Recovery from wildfire

Porongurup National Park is in the process of recovery from a severe wildfire that swept through the park in February 2007.

The fire started outside the park and quickly spread through grassland into jarrah, marri and karri forests, burning nearly 90 per cent of the park's 2,500 hectares.

On the northern side, the fire swept up the peaks so fiercely that it defoliated most of the forest canopy. On the slightly moister southern side, the fire was milder.

The habitats of most Porongurup flora and fauna species were damaged by the 2007 fire, some severely. As these habitats recover, many species will recolonise the range.

Many species of wildflowers, especially orchids, flower profusely during the early years following a fire. However, forests take many decades to recover.



Above: You may see new growth sprouting from buds on the sides of charred karri trees, showing that these wounded giants are still alive.

Flora

Surveys conducted in the past years have identified 700 species of plants growing in Porongurup Range, including 10 endemic species.

The majority of Porongurup plant species are adapted to fire. New growth quickly sprouted from seeds stored in the soil, from roots under the soil and from buds hidden beneath the scorched tree bark.

Karri forest and open jarrah/marri woodlands are the dominant forms of vegetation in the park.

On the lower slopes, marri (*Corymbia calophylla*), jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and yate (*Eucalyptus cornuta*) trees grow in the poorer soils that have formed from weathered layers of laterite (red, iron-rich rock) and sand.

Karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolour*) trees are found high on the peaks where the granite based-soils are deep and loamy (rich in organic matter).

Karri needs at least 750 millimetres of rainfall per year. The average annual rainfall for the Range falls short at about 700 millimetres. Run-off from non-porous granite surfaces supplements the rainfall allowing the karri trees to survive in this drier area.

The Porongurup's karri trees became separated from the rest of WA's karri forest about 5,000 years ago and have evolved to become slightly different genetically.



Fauna

Since being vested as a national park, more than eighty species of birds have been identified in the range, including the rufous tree-creeper and scarlet and yellow robins. Carnaby's cockatoo, Baudin's cockatoo, and the forest red-tailed black cockatoo—all threatened species—have also been sighted.

In 2006, eight male noisy scrub-birds were translocated into the park. Two are known to have survived the fire. In 10 or more years, when suitable habitat recovers, additional scrub-birds may be introduced to the park.

Some species will benefit from the lush post-fire growth. Western grey kangaroos and brush tail wallabies, bandicoots, ringtail possums, brushtail possums, honey possums, pygmy possums and bush rats will gradually repopulate the park from unburnt pockets of habitat and areas outside the park.

As leafy litter builds up on the forest floor, frogs, echidnas, goannas and carpet pythons plus a multitude of invertebrates will recolonise moist habitats.



Weeds and feral animals

The fire has stimulated the growth of many weed seeds that were lying dormant in the soil. A battle to combat these invaders is underway in the park and the surrounding community.

An ongoing fox baiting program, known as *Western Shield*, has enabled fauna numbers to increase in national parks across the south-west.

This program will help the Porongurup's fauna to recover from the 2007 fire and will support future efforts to reintroduce fauna species to the park.



Facilities and things to do



Scenic drives – Enjoy impressive views by taking a drive around the entire range using Bolganup Road, Angwin Park Road, Woodlands Road, Millinup Road, Chester Pass Road and Mount Barker–Porongurup Road. The route can be taken in either direction – 23 kilometres, mostly unsealed with steep sections.

For a shorter drive, Angwin Park Road between Bolganup Road and Woodlands Road offers outstanding views of granite outcrops and of Stirling Range to the north – five kilometres, unsealed with steep sections.



Picnic and barbecue – Gas barbecues are provided for your use free of charge at Tree-in-the-Rock and Castle Rock day use areas. No wood fires are allowed in the park.



Toilets – Toilets are provided in both Tree-in-the-Rock and Castle Rock day use areas.



Access – Toilet facilities at Castle Rock and Tree-in-the-Rock day use areas are designed for use by people with disabilities.



Camping – Camping is not provided in the park. Accommodation is available in the surrounding community.

Park entry fees



Visitors are required to pay a fee at an entry station. Your fees help to protect the park and improve visitor facilities.

Current Holiday, Annual All Parks, Annual Local or Gold Star Passes can also be used (available at DEC offices and many tourist and visitor centres in Western Australia).

Display your pass on your vehicle dashboard or windscreen.



Bushwalking

Walking is a great way to discover the park. All trails lead up hill, with the exception of Bolganup Trail. Stay on pathways to prevent damage to plants.

See the 'Plan ahead and prepare' section on the back panel of this brochure.

Trail classifications



Bolganup Trail – 600 metre loop

Start at Tree-in-the-Rock car parking area. Walk through karri forest along a path that crosses a small creek.



Devil's Slide Trail – 5 kilometres return

Follow Wansbrough Walk from Tree-in-the-Rock for 1600 metres, then turn to right. Magnificent views from the summit.



Hayward Peak and Nancy Peak Walk – 5.5 kilometre loop

Start from Tree-in-the-Rock. The path climbs steeply, passing Hayward Peak, to reach the crest of the range at Nancy Peak lookout. Also leads to lookout at Morgans Peak. Return via Wansbrough Walk. Can be walked in opposite direction.



Wansbrough Walk – 4 kilometres one way

Walk through karri forest along a gully between Devils Slide and Nancy Peak. Wansbrough Walk intersects with Nancy Peak Walk and Devils Slide Trail. It then continues to the park's southern boundary and becomes a road that connects with Millinup Road. Some visitors leave a second vehicle at the southern end of the pathway and start at Tree-in-the-Rock.



Castle Rock Trail to Balancing Rock – 3 kilometres return

Walk upslope through jarrah and marri forest to reach karri forest and the intriguing Balancing Rock.

To reach Castle Rock summit, less than 100 metres further, requires scrambling over rocks and climbing a ladder. Moderate to good fitness is required, plus a head for heights.

Fighting dieback

Caused by an introduced microscopic water mould that dwells in the soil, *Phytophthora* dieback kills plants by rotting their roots.

Dieback threatens biodiversity by killing plants and destroying wildlife habitat, placing the health of whole ecosystems at risk.

Phytophthora dieback is present in the park but not to the extent found in the neighbouring Stirling Range. Some signs of the disease are found in the jarrah/marri forest on the lower slopes. The more fertile soil found on the higher slopes favours the growth of less susceptible plant species.

Machinery, humans and animals spread the disease by carrying infested soil. Once present in the landscape, the dieback water mould can move in soil and water or by root-to-root contact between plants. No cure has been found for *Phytophthora* dieback.

You can help to prevent the further spread of dieback

- Clean mud or soil from footwear at the start and finish of any walks you do in natural areas.
- For regular bushwalkers, a small spray bottle of 100 per cent methylated spirits is ideal for cleaning footwear.
- Stay on designated tracks and trails and avoid wet soil conditions.
- Abide by management signs and do not enter restricted areas.

Signs in the park will help you avoid spreading dieback. Look for these symbols:



