

Mount Augustus National Park Burringurrah



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



**PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
SERVICE**

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Front cover Mount Augustus National Park. *Photo – Janine Guenther*

Above Wildflowers in the cooler months can be prolific. *Photo – WendyPayne/DBCA*

Mount Augustus National Park

Mount Augustus is an 'inselberg', meaning 'island mountain', that rises 715m above the surrounding alluvial plain. Arid shrubland of wattles, cassias and eremophilas, covers the inselberg with spinifex found near the summit.

Take the 45km, two-wheel-drive unsealed road around its base to explore seven visitor sites and take in ever-changing vistas. You will encounter rocky creeks, gorges, open plains, Aboriginal rock engravings (petroglyphs) and a variety of wildlife.

Shady groves of river gums around the base indicate groundwater storage. These areas are important to the local ecology. Cassias and wattles including mulga and gidgee are scattered across the surrounding plain providing habitat for a variety of birds including spinifex pigeons, crimson chats, mulga parrots, babblers, emus and bustards. Bungarras (goannas) and red kangaroos are common on the plain, while euros and birds of prey are found closer to the inselberg.

On the boundary of the park, Cattle Pool (at Goolinee) has permanent water and is home to a variety of water birds. Further west, Emu Hill Lookout provides the perfect location to photograph the mount at its most picturesque, on sunset.



Above Mount Augustus foxglove and jewel beetle. *Photo– Janine Guenther*

Aboriginal history

Mount Augustus and surrounds are the traditional lands of the Wajarri people. Burringurrah is the Wajarri name for Mount Augustus.

In times of plenty, the Wajarri people would roam over a wide area of the Gascoyne. In times of drought, they would return to areas where water was available, such as the natural springs along the base of Mount Augustus. Aboriginal occupation is evident by engravings (petroglyphs) on rock walls at Munde, Oorambo and Beedoboondoo visitor sites, and by numerous stone tools discovered in these areas. Burringurrah continues to be a significant site for the Wajarri people.

Burringurrah was undergoing his initiation into manhood. The rigours of this process so distressed him that he ran away, thereby breaking Aboriginal law. Tribesmen pursued the boy, finally catching up with him and spearing him in the upper right leg as his punishment. Burringurrah fell to the ground; the spearhead broke from its shaft and protruded from his leg. The boy tried to crawl away but was hit with a mulgarrah (fighting stick).

Burringurrah collapsed and died, lying on his belly with his left leg bent up beside his body. You can see his final resting pose when you approach Mount Augustus from the south. The geological fracture lines indicate the wounds inflicted by the mulgarrah. Look for the spear stump in his leg that today is called Edney's Lookout.



Above Edney's Spring. *Photo – DBCA*

Geology

Mount Augustus is ancient. Around 1600 million years ago, sand and other material was deposited on top of older 1800-million-year-old granite by an ancient river system. This material eventually compacted and lithified to form sandstone. This area was then buried under marine sediment from shallow seas during a later warmer period of earth's history, 1600–1070 million years ago. Movements within the earth's crust along fault lines at around 900 million years ago, caused the rock layers to buckle and fold into an arch-like structure called an anticline. Erosion has since worn away the north-eastern face making it an asymmetrical anticline and revealing the underlying granite at The Pound.

Whilst the marine layers have long since eroded away from Mount Augustus, they can still be found in the hills around Cobra and Mount Augustus homesteads.

The deep red colouring of Mount Augustus comes from iron in the sandstone that, in contact with oxygen, has oxidised in the surface layer. The true colour of the sandstone underneath is white as it is protected from exposure to oxygen. Underlying white sandstone can be seen in patches where the overlying red rock has broken away.



Above Winter rains can bring a flush of colour to the landscape with a variety of wildflowers like this *Halgania* sp. Photo – Wendy Payne/DBCA

Hiking in Mount Augustus National Park

There are a range of trails of varying degrees of length and difficulty. Spend a few days doing shorter hikes before considering the longer and much more difficult trails. All trails in the park are essentially unmodified, often steep and with limited directional signage on the difficult trails. Hikers should read the accompanying information on each trail before hiking.

The following classes apply to Mt Augustus hikes. Please respect the Wajarri Traditional Owner's request that visitors do not walk the mount at night for reasons of safety and heritage protection.



Class 3 Moderate hiking trail with clear directional signage. May include minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections, steps, and unstable or slippery surfaces. An average level of fitness is needed.



Class 5 Challenging, rough, unformed trail with very difficult sections and limited directional marking. You will encounter natural hazards such as long, steep sections, rock scrambles, and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only for self-reliant, very experienced bushwalkers with a high level of fitness.



Hiking risk area

CAUTION – HEAT STRESS CAN KILL.

Your safety is our concern but your responsibility.



Avoid hiking in hot weather – hike in the coolest times of the day. Temperatures can be extreme, exceeding 40°C. Radiant heat from the rocks can increase the temperature by 5–10 degrees Celsius.

Plan and prepare – provide a trusted responsible person with enough detail of your travel plans so they can get help if required.

Start slowly – spend a few days hiking shorter trails before considering longer hikes.

Hike in groups – of three or more experienced hikers and stay on marked trails. In an emergency, a group usually improves outcomes.



Physical fitness – use trail classification information to choose trails that match your fitness level. Know your limits!

Water – carry and drink a minimum of one litre per person, per hour when hiking and more in hotter weather. There is no drinking water in the park.

Dress appropriately – wear a broad brimmed hat, loose long-sleeved clothing, sturdy footwear and sunscreen.

Carry a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) – or satellite phone. It could save your life. Mobile phone coverage is extremely limited.

Weather – check the weather forecast before you leave and be prepared for localised changes to the forecast.

Stay safe and prepare well when hiking.



1 litre per person, per hour



Above Cattle Pool. Photo – Tourism WA

Hiking trails

Short hikes (up to 500m)



Petroglyph Trail (Mundee)

Class 3, 200m return, 10–20 minutes

This short hike has some steps and unstable loose rocks. A moderate slope leads you to Aboriginal engravings on a rock wall. This is a place to quietly observe without touching these Wajarri symbols and ponder their meaning.



Corella Trail (Goolinee)

Class 3, 500m return, 20 minutes

This trail along the south bank of Cattle Pool has some steps and slippery surfaces. Look and listen for Corellas and other birds in their natural habitat.



Gum Grove Trail (Warrarla)

Class 3, 500m return, 20 minutes

This trail winds through a shady grove of river red gums with some steps, loose rocks and slippery surfaces. Turn around when you reach the edge of the shady gum trees and return to the carpark.



Above The seed pods of the sticky hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *spatulata*) add a splash of colour to your hike. Photo – Wendy Payne/DBCA

Moderate length hikes (500m–1km)



Flintstone Rock Trail (Beedoboondu)

Class 3, 650m return, 30 minutes

This short hike along a rocky gully leads to Aboriginal engravings under Flintstone Rock. Be aware of loose rocks and slippery surfaces. Some rock hopping is required. Turn around at the engravings and return to the carpark.



Ooramboo Trail (Ooramboo)

Class 3, 550m return, 15–30 minutes

This hike takes you to Edney's Spring past Aboriginal engravings along an escarpment. Be prepared for some steps and unstable, loose rocks.



Saddle Trail (The Pound)

Class 3, 800m return, 30–60 minutes

This trail involves loose rocks, unstable and slippery surfaces and crosses a usually dry creek bed. A good level of fitness is needed to climb a moderate slope to the saddle that provides a view over the Lyons River valley to the north.



Above Wedge-tailed eagle. Photo – Janine Guenther

Half-day hikes (more than 1km)



Kotka Gorge Trail (Warrarla)

**Class 5, 2.7km return (from carpark),
1–2 hours**

Hike the Gum Grove Trail to the edge of the shady gum trees, then continue along a usually dry, rocky watercourse. This extremely difficult trail involves very steep rises and scrambling over rocks. The end point is the Kotka Gorge entrance. Take advantage of shade from the boulders at this point.



Goordgeela Trail (Goordgeela)

Class 5, 3km return, 1–2 hours

This extremely difficult, rough unformed trail passes through open acacia shrubland for 550m, then scrambles up a long and very steep rocky watercourse with minimal directional signage. A steep ascent takes you to a lookout with views to the north. Only for very fit and experienced bushwalkers.



Edney's Trail (Ooramboo)

**Class 5, 5km return (from carpark),
2.5–4 hours**

For very fit and experienced bushwalkers, this extremely difficult hike involves lengthy rocky sections of rough unformed trail, very steep slopes and rock scrambling to reach Edney's Lookout. With minimal directional signage this trail is suitable for those seeking impressive panoramic views without tackling the much longer, extreme Summit Trail.



Above Geological giant – Mt Augustus in the late afternoon.

Photo – WendyPayne/DBCA

Day hikes



The Summit Trail (Beedoboondy)

Class 5, 12.5km return, 5–8 hours

The Summit Trail is:

- **open** – May to August.
- **closed after 7am** – September, October, March and April. Start your hike before 7am during these months.
- **closed** – November to February.

Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt this full day, challenging hike. Expect a very steep unformed trail with rock scrambling and minimal directional signage. It ascends over 650 metres to the summit that offers extensive views of the surrounding plain and distant ranges. It's hard work going up, it's even harder coming back down. Rescues put other lives at risk and can take time as there is no rescue helicopter in this region.



Above Hikers admiring the view from the Summit Trail. Photo – Sue Hancock/DBCA

Care for the park

- No camping in the park – camping is available at the nearby Mount Augustus Tourist Park.
- Be clean – please take your rubbish out of the park when you leave.
- Leave what you find – such as rocks, plants and other natural objects.
- No campfires – fires are not permitted in the park.
- Wildlife – do not disturb animals and plants. Firearms and pets are not permitted in the park.
- Be respectful of Aboriginal culture – enjoy the privilege of visiting petroglyphs. They are culturally significant to the Wajarri people.





Below The ring-tailed dragon (*Ctenophorus caudicinctus*) commonly occurs on rocky outcrops. *Photo – Wendy Payne/DBCA*

Visitor information

Access

Mount Augustus is 465km from Carnarvon via Gascoyne Junction and 345km from Meekatharra. Roads are gravel but suitable for two-wheel-drive vehicles. Roads are often closed after rainfall. Seek advice from the local shires.

Carry extra fuel, water and supplies in case of unforeseen events/delays.

Always stay on signposted tracks and stay with your vehicle if you break down.

Overnight

Privately operated Mount Augustus Tourist Park provides accommodation, powered caravan sites, camping facilities, food items, barbecue area and fuel.

Ph: (08) 9943 0527

E: mtaugustustouristpark@skymesh.com.au

W: mtaugustustouristpark.com

More information

Visitor information is available at the Mount Augustus Tourist Park shop.

**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Parks and Wildlife Service, Gascoyne District**

Knight Terrace, Denham WA 6537

Ph: (08) 9948 2226

Shire of Upper Gascoyne Ph: (08) 9943 0988

Shire of Meekatharra Ph: (08) 9980 0600

In an emergency, call 000

exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au



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app that
could save
your life**



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Download the free Emergency+ app before your visit. Use the app in an emergency to call for assistance. If there is no mobile phone coverage you **WILL NOT** be able to call **000** but the app will provide you with your GPS location.

Check for alerts and updates directly related to parks and major trails at alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au and for all emergency information in Western Australia at emergency.wa.gov.au.

Find more park visitor information, book campsites and share your experiences at exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au.

@waparkswildlife



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Information current at October 2022.

Publication available in alternative format on request.



Hiking risk area

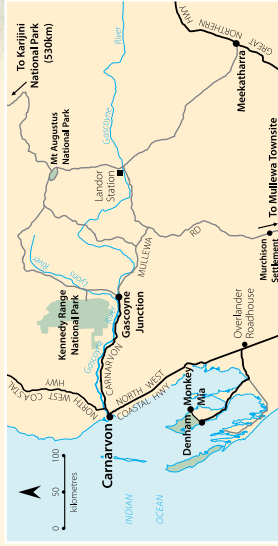
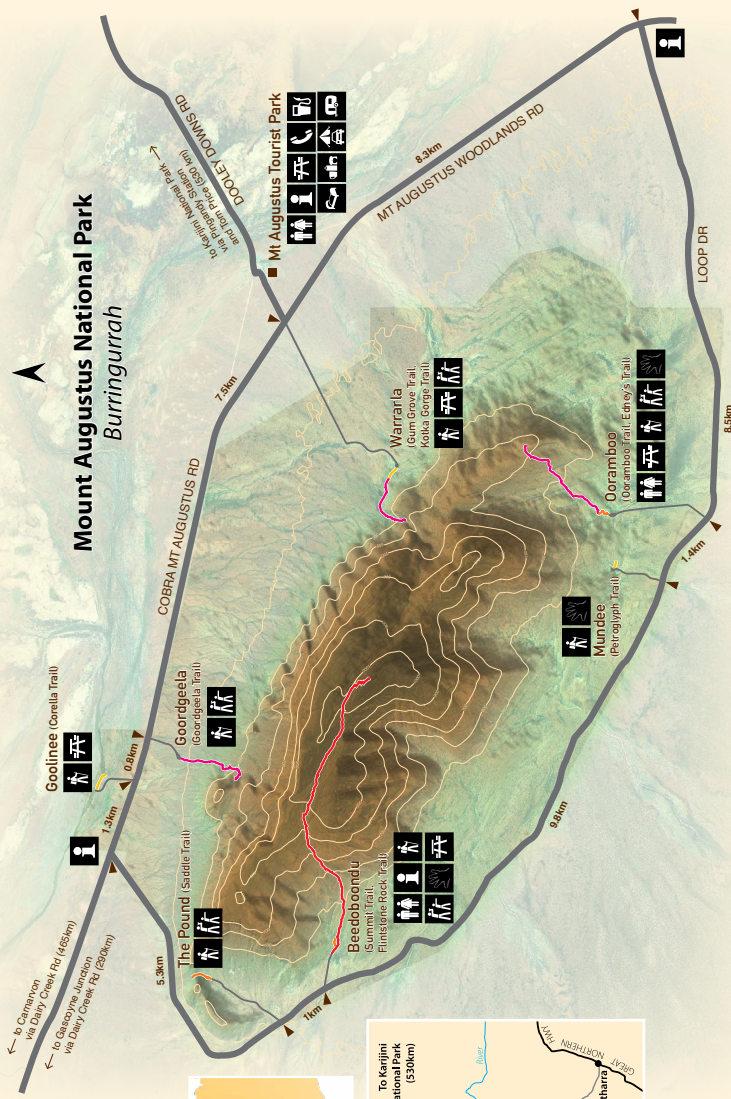
CAUTION – HEAT STRESS CAN KILL.

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|----------------|
| | National park | | Accommodation |
| | Unsealed road | | Telephone |
| | Sealed road | | Fuel available |
| | Short hikes | | Basic supplies |
| | Moderate length hikes | | Camping sites |
| | Half-day hikes | | Caravan sites |
| | Day hikes | | Picnic tables |
| | Toilets | | Scenic views |
| | Information | | Hiking trail |
| | Aboriginal cultural site | | |



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