Our Parks and Reserves as a resource for your excursion

Inspire your students!

From a day trip to an overnight or week-long stay, excursions camps and field trips are a great way for teachers to present hands-on learning experiences and share knowledge in a unique way.

Parks and Wildlife Commission NT Parks and Reserves are ideal locations to enhance any education program, whether the visit be related to culture, history, science, outdoor education, or the creative arts.

This guide contains information to support excursions to Leliyn / Edith Falls in Nitmiluk National Park, an area jointly managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory and the Jawoyn Traditional Owners.

We hope to see you out there!

Provide your feedback! We would love to receive your feedback and comments on this excursion guide, contact the PWCNT Community Engagement Officer in Katherine on 08 89738 865.

CAMPGROUND FACILITIES

The campground has ablution blocks with shower and toilet facilities, gas BBQs and unpowered sites. The campground fills quickly during the peak season from May to September and sites are allocated on a first come first served basis. Please call the Leliyn Kiosk to discuss your camp site requirements if you are travelling with a larger group.

The day use area has free gas BBQs, picnic tables, toilets and car and bus parking.

There are no rubbish bins available at Leliyn, please take all your rubbish with you.

Overnight campsites at Sweetwater can be booked through the Leliyn Kiosk, fuel stoves must be used, no campfires are allowed. There is a composting toilet at the campsite.

The tracks to the edge of the plunge pool are wheelchair accessible. There are steps at the plunge pool entry points.
SAFETY 
DUTY OF CARE
- Teachers employed by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) who take part in excursions have a responsibility to ensure that departmental Educational Excursions policy and Educational excursions guidelines are met (see http://www.det.nt.gov.au/about-us/policies/documents/schools/school-management/educational-excursions for policies and associated forms). Other States and Territories will have equivalent policies to be abided by.
- In addition to this, teachers have the responsibility to exercise proper care and supervision throughout the duration of the excursion. The duty of care of the teacher requires the reasonable steps to protect the student against risk of injury or harm that the teacher could reasonably foresee. The rules and regulations of the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT while within Park/Reserve/Garden boundaries must also be abided by.

RISK MANAGEMENT
- DECS Occupational and Safety policy requires the completion of an Excursion self inspection checklist (also found via the aforementioned link) prior to any excursion. The site-specific information provided below should assist you in completing this checklist.

SAFETY and COMFORT
- Observe park safety signs.
- Carry an appropriate first aid kit at all times.
- Diving or jumping off rocks into the water is very dangerous. Slips and falls can easily occur, water depth changes regularly and submerged rocks and logs may not be visible from the surface. Please do not allow students to climb on or jump off rocks.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
- Carry and drink plenty of water (PWCNT recommends consumption of one liter per hour, more if undertaking strenuous activity).
- Wear clothing suitable to the conditions, recommended items include; a hat, sunscreen, enclosed and sturdy shoes and insect repellent. Walking boots are recommended for the more difficult walks / overnight hikes.
- There is limited and unreliable mobile phone coverage. Consider a satellite phone or a personal locator beacon for emergency communication.

Annual Temperatures in Katherine
May to August (cool season) September to December (hot season)
Daytime Max: 29-32°C Daytime Max: 35-47°C
Nighttime lows 13°C Nighttime lows: 19-26°C
January to April (main wet season)
Daytime Max: 33-35°C Daytime Max: 35-47°C
Nighttime lows: 20-24°C
Nighttime lows: 19-26°C

Temperatures on the escarpment may be up to 10°C higher than near the river.

Average rainfall is 900-1000 mm per annum with most rain falling during the peak wet season from mid-December/ January to March.

DRINKING WATER - Drinking water is available in the Leliyn campground. We advise bringing all your drinking water with you for a day visit and treating all drinking water from natural sources.
So you’ve decided to go! Here is some further information to help plan your excursion...

Leliyn / Edith Falls, what’s it all about?
The Edith River comes down from the Nitmiluk escarpment at Leliyn, creating the beautiful swimming holes at the Top Pools and Leliyn plunge pool.

The sandstone and riverine communities of Leliyn provide habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna. Leliyn is a culturally important place for the Jawoyn people who are the Traditional Owners of Nitmiluk National Park. Leliyn is managed to ensure the maintenance of the cultural significance of the area while allowing the Jawoyn to share this place with people from all over the world.

The Park Rangers and Traditional Owners manage Nitmiluk for weeds, fire and feral animals according to the Plan of Management.

Suggested excursion themes

Joint Management
Nitmiluk was handed back to the Aboriginal Traditional Owners on 10 September 1989 and leased back to the Northern Territory Government to be jointly managed as a National Park in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. The Parks and Wildlife Commission and Traditional Owners are responsible for managing the Park. Together they have developed a Plan of Management and renamed the Park to reflect the underlying tenure, Joint Management arrangements and Traditional Owners’ ongoing cultural connection with the Park.

Culture, heritage and history
Nitmiluk National Park has a rich cultural history. People traditionally used the region for cultural practices, hunting, fishing and as a refuge. The area was used by the pastoral and mining industries from the late 1800’s until the original, much smaller Katherine Gorge National Park was declared in 1962. The Leliyn/ Edith Falls area was declared a National Park in 1963 and the two were amalgamated in 1977. Nitmiluk National Park now covers 2900 square kilometers of land that abuts the much larger Kakadu National Park.

Environment / Nature
A visit to Leliyn / Edith Falls can include investigations into Jawoyn culture, freshwater ecology, tropical and savannah ecosystems, geology, animal and plant adaptation or different aspects of land management such as fire, weeds and feral animal control.

Get Active!
Walks at Leliyn vary from medium to difficult and include the well-marked 2.7km Leliyn Loop Walk and the 8.6km return hike to Sweetwater Pool.
Long Hole Pool, half way to Sweetwater, is a great destination for a quiet afternoon swim and explore. The plunge pool, Long Hole and Sweetwater are all perfect for snorkeling with many different freshwater fish, turtles and freshwater crustaceans.
Learn and Discover

There are many different resources and supporting materials available to enhance the Leliyn / Edith Falls school excursion experience. The best way to introduce students to the inhabitants of Leliyn / Edith Falls is to learn facts about the local plants and animals before visiting. Incorporate this information into your pre-visit studies to make the most of your time on park.

**Animals**
The escarpment and lowland environments in Nitmiluk National Park provide complex habitats with important niches for native animals. There are 44 mammal species, 78 reptile species, 25 amphibian species and 206 bird species.

Many different animals may be seen during the day or on a spotlight walk as part of your visit. Why not try a ‘fish survey’ and go snorkeling in the Leliyn plunge pool or Long Hole Pool.

**Plants**
The diverse habitats in Nitmiluk National Park are home to more than 750 different species of plants. There are many examples of plant adaptations to water conservation, clear distinctions between plant communities associated with different landforms and species that are susceptible to the impacts of fire and grazing.

**Joint Management / Cultural information**
The connection of Traditional Owners to the land is strong in Nitmiluk National Park. Nitmiluk is a living cultural landscape with many significant cultural sites. The Jawoyn people manage the park in partnership with the Northern Territory Government through the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.

**Geology**
The sandstone escarpment of Nitmiluk National Park is the southern outlier of the Arnhem Plateau and part of the Kombolgie Formation. The Edith River runs along fissures in the sandstone, down into the Leliyn plunge pool and on into the lower lying Edith River valley where it eventually becomes a tributary to the Daly River. The Kombolgie Formation was laid down approximately 1650 million years ago and has an average thickness of around 900m. You can see evidence of horizontal layering along with the erosion and weathering caused by rain, wind and the many sandstone leaks and springs.

**EXTERNAL LINKS**
For more information visit:

www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au
www.nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/parks-resources-for-schools
www.nitmiluktours.com.au
www.visitkatherine.com.au
Incorporate activities such as an evening spotlight walk, snorkeling, a tracks and traces search or a morning bird watch into your park visit. There are many resources currently available online with tips and ideas for outdoor learning. Always remember to check with the Parks and Wildlife website before you head on out, as seasonal changes in water levels may close some areas of Leliyn.

Walks and Experiences

**SWIMMING AND SNORKELING**

The Leliyn waterhole at the base of the Nitmiluk escarpment is fed by Edith Falls and flows into the Edith River. The pool is extremely variable in depth with some great shallow areas ideal for younger swimmers. In the wet season, the river rises and the pool is closed due to the increased risk posed by strong currents and saltwater crocodile incursion. The Top Pool is half way along the Leliyn Loop Walk and is an alternative to the plunge pool. Long Hole Pool and Sweetwater Pool are also up on top of the escarpment along the Sweetwater Track. These can be destinations for well prepared visitors. Snorkel at the plunge pool, Long Hole and Sweetwater to see many different species of fish, turtles and freshwater crustaceans.

For NT Teachers, please refer to the DECS School Swimming, Water Safety and Aquatic Procedures.

**WALKS AND TRAILS**

Leliyn Loop walk, 2.6km well-marked loop track leading up the escarpment and past lookout with great views down into the plunge pool and across the Edith River valley. **Sweetwater Track** 8.6km return track following the Edith River, passing Long Hole Pool and other beautiful swimming and snorkeling spots. The track is the last section of the Jatbula Trail that links the Katherine Gorge and Leliyn. All signage beyond Sweetwater is one way, please do not walk past Sweetwater Pool.

**REMOTE CAMPING**

There is a bush campsite catering to a maximum of 20 campers at Sweetwater. Well prepared visitors can get overnight camping permits from the Leliyn Kiosk.

**RANGER GUIDED TALKS**

The Territory Parks Alive program of Ranger guided talks and walks are conducted from May to September. **Tap into local knowledge** - Community Engagement Officers may be available to provide a short talk to your group. Contact 89 738 865 for bookings and information.

### Nearby locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Gorge</td>
<td>Also within Nitmiluk National Park, 30km from Katherine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Reserve</td>
<td>A limestone cave, tours available through Nitmiluk Tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsey National Park</td>
<td>100km south of Katherine near Mataranka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Museum</td>
<td>Insights into Katherine region history including WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Visitor Centre</td>
<td>Information on other tourism and visitor experiences in the Katherine area</td>
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Need Help? Or more information?
Contact the Katherine Community Engagement Officer on
(08) 89738 865
We may be able to contribute ideas towards enhancing your excursion program.