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 creative arts.

This guide contains information to support excursions to Trephina Gorge Nature Park. The park is jointly managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory and the Eastern Arrernte 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 Alice Springs on (08) 8951 8247.

Trephina Gorge Nature Park

Situated in the East MacDonnell Ranges, Trephina Gorge is known for its sheer quartzite cliffs and River Red Gum-lined watercourses. The Park contains two gorges, Trephina and John Hayes; the latter can only be reached by high clearance 4WD. The Park can be used as a base to visit N’Dhala Gorge, Arltunga and Ruby Gap.

Walks cater for all fitness levels, traversing across habitats typical of the MacDonnell Ranges. A stop in at the biggest Ghost Gum in Australia should be part of any park visit.

Swimming is permitted, however the rock holes can dry up. The cooler months (April to September) are the most pleasant times to visit the park.

Located 85 km east of Alice Springs, the park is accessible to all vehicles via the Ross Highway.

There is a 9 km drive into Trephina Gorge, from the Ross HWY, the last 5 km into the park is an unsealed road.

The John Hayes Rock hole track is high clearance 4WD access only.

Contact

Trephina Gorge Ranger Station
(08) 8956 9765
PWCNT Head Office
(08) 8951 8250
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 https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies(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 a teacher requires reasonable steps to protect the student against risks 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.
• Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
• Carry and drink plenty of water (PWCNT recommends consumption of one litre 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.
• Hiking shoes are recommended for longer hikes (e.g. Trephina Ridgetop Trail).
• Swim only where recommended.
• Do not feed native animals.

Annual Temperatures in Alice Springs

April to September cool season       October to March hot season
Daytime Max: 15-35°C         Daytime Max: 28-45°C
Night time lows can get down to -5°C       Night time lows: 14-28°C
Average rainfall for the area is about 300 mm per annum and can occur at any time of the year.

FACILITIES

The Trephina Bluff and Trephina Gorge Campgrounds are suitable for school groups. These sites contain; pit toilets, picnic tables, drinking water, communal fire pits (firewood collection not permitted on park) and gas barbecues. Camping is only permitted in designated camping areas. A school group site can be booked at the Bluff campground through negotiation with the park staff (08 8956 9765). Toilets are shared with the general public.

Camping fees are $3.30 per adult, $1.65 per student (5 - 15 yo).

COMMUNICATION - There is no mobile phone coverage.

RUBBISH - Bins are not provided. Please take your rubbish with you.

ELECTRICITY - There is no electricity and generators are not permitted.

FIRES - Communal fire pits are available, but firewood must be brought from outside the park. Firewood can be purchased in Alice Springs.

Please Remember

• Keep to designated roads and tracks.
• All historic, cultural items and wildlife are protected.
• Firewood collection is not permitted in the Park.
• Fires are only permitted in designated fire pits.
• Bins are not provided, please take your rubbish with you.
• Pets are not permitted on Park.
• Generators are not permitted.
• There is no phone coverage.
Trephina Gorge Nature Park

Locality Map

- Chain of Ponds Walk: 1.5 hours return
- East to Arltunga Historical Reserve: 46 km
- West to Alice Springs: 80 km

Park Map

-短途漫游
-野餐设施
-木烧烤
-水
-信息
-厕所
-露营
-观景点
-停车场
-4WD 轨道
-未铺装道路
-公园边界

公园设施与活动
- 汽车烧烤
- 木烧烤
- 水
- 四轮驱动轨道
- 雨水
- 公园边界
So you’ve decided to go! Here is some further information to help plan your excursion...

Trephina Gorge, what’s it all about?

Part of the East MacDonnell Ranges, Trephina Gorge Nature Park is managed for its cultural, natural, historical and recreational values. The park provides a low-key setting to explore the landscape and wildlife. Bush camping facilities allow visitors to ‘get back to nature’. Gaps and gorges provide important habitats for many plants and animal species. The Park was declared protected in 1965, prior to this it was part of a pastoral property the Garden Station. Staying at Trephina Gorge Nature Park allows day trips to explore other Parks including Arltunga Historical Reserve, Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park (4WD access) and Ruby Gap Nature Park (4WD access).

Suggested excursion themes

Joint Management

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is one of many Jointly Managed Parks in the central Australian region. The park was handed back to the Aboriginal traditional owners on 12 June 2009 and leased by the Northern Territory Government to be jointly managed as a national park for 99 years. The Parks and Wildlife Commission and traditional owners are responsible for managing the Park. Together they have developed and are implementing the Trephina Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan.

Culture, heritage and history

Trephina Gorge is one of several parks in the region, use Trephina as a base to visit nearby N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, which are conserved primarily for cultural reasons. Similarly Trephina is close to historical reserves such as Arltunga Historical Reserve and Ruby Gap Nature Park, both of which have ties to mining in Central Australia.

Environment / Nature / Land Management

A visit to Trephina Gorge can include investigation into arid ecosystems, animals and plants suitability for the desert, and / or different aspects of land management including fire, weeds or feral animal control. Rock faces of the Gorges have evidence of the regional orogeny (mountain building event) identifiable for new or experienced geology students. Various rock types can be identified on walks around the Park.

Get Active!

Walks at Trephina Gorge cater for every age group and fitness level. The most challenging walk is the Ridgetop Walk (9 km, 5 hours one way). For more information on walks see page 7.

Creative Arts

The gorge, landscape, colours and shapes often serve as inspiration for budding artists. There are many lookouts (e.g. Panorama Walk) and scenic places within the park to capture this. The large Ghost Gum is a feature best viewed in the afternoon light. Please remember that any commercial filming and photography on park must be in line with PWCNT permit policies visit our website for more information.

EXTERNAL SOURCES

See pages 5 and 6 for specific activities and information for your visit. Here are some external links that may also provide further information;

www.nt.gov.au/parks
www.facebook.com/ParksandWildlifeNT
Trephina Gorge Visitor Fact sheet
Walks of Trephina Fact Sheet
Learn and Discover

There are many different resources and supporting materials available to enhance the Trephina Gorge school excursion experience. Use the natural classroom for hands on learning! Take lessons out in nature and learn new skills. The best way to introduce students to the Gorge inhabitants is by reading up on facts about the local plants and animals before visiting. Incorporate an educational activity to learn more while out there or choose a walk or experience and take a look at our information sheets for all you need to know.

Animals

The MacDonnell Ranges are a complex habitat including important niches for native animals. Many different animals may be seen during the day or on a spotlight walk as part of your visit. Learn more about the more common, rare and significant animals before you visit by doing your own research.

Black-footed Rock-wallaby, Stimsons Python (pictured), Marbled velvet Gecko, Euro, Micro-bats, Mistletoe Bird, Zebra Finch.

"Regional field guide to birds - Red Centre to the Top End" by G. Pizzey & F. Knight
"Reptiles of Australia" by S. Wilson & G. Swan
"Australian Bats" by S. Churchill

Plants

With many different habitat types across the MacDonnell Ranges, the east is no different. See the changing landscape by doing the Panorama Walk and see the diversity of habitat types in these rugged ranges. Discover these and other different plant species during your visit.

Spinifex, Calitris (native pine), Mulga, Witchetty Bush, Spearbush, River Red Gum, Bloodwood, Ghost Gum (pictured), Buffel grass (introduced species).

"A guide to plants of inland Australia" by P. Moore
"Central Australian Flora - Forbs and Small Shrubs" Australian Plants Society Alice Springs

Geology

Folded rock can seen in Trephina Gorge, evidence of the mountain building event that formed the MacDonnell Ranges. The formation of the gorge itself through weathering and erosion have contributed to what is present today. Different rock types can be identified on walks of the area. Here are suggested resources for more information.

"A Layman’s Guide to the Geology of Central Australia" by D. R. Woolley
"A Guide to the Geology and Landforms of Central Australia" by R. B. Thompson

Historical information

The first Europeans to visit Trephina Gorge were John Ross and the Overland Telegraph Line survey team. The Park was originally part of ‘The Garden Station’ pastoral lease until 1965 and was gazetted as a Park in 1978. Near Trephina Gorge is Arltunga Historical Reserve, Central Australia's first town, and the site of the gold rush in 1887. Also nearby and linked to the mining rush is Ruby Gap, named for the 'rubies' (later found out to be high quality garnets) that were discovered there in 1886.

Joint Management / Cultural information

The connection of Arrernte people to the land is strong across central Australia and recognised by the joint management of this Park. To increase your understanding joint management and these special places, include an interaction with a Traditional Owner of the region. A fee for service will apply.
Try some activities on site like searching for tracks and traces, a waterbug survey in the Gap, or take the class on a spotlight walk in the evening or a morning bird watch to practice skills in wildlife spotting. Incorporate these or other activities into your park visit, there are many resources currently available online with tips and ideas for outdoor learning.

Walks and Experiences

WALKS - Download the ‘Walking Tracks of Trephina’ information sheet for more detail.
Gorge Stroll, 500 m return, 20 min, EASY. Walk through the spectacular Trephina Gorge, water holes can be present after heavy rains.
Trephina Gorge Walk, 2 km loop, 1 hour return, MODERATE. This walk takes you along the rim of the Gorge with scenic views. The track descends into the Gorge and follows the creek back to the carpark.
Panorama Walk, 2.5 km loop, 1 hour, MODERATE. This walk offers spectacular views overlooking the Park and to Mordor Pound in the north.
Chain of Ponds Walk (At John Hayes Rock hole), 3.5 km loop, 1.5 hours, DIFFICULT. This walk starts with an easy 20 minute walk to the rim of the narrow gorge, offering spectacular views. However, some difficult climbing and scrambling is required to continue to the carpark via the gorge (impassable after heavy rain).

LONG WALKS AND TRAILS

Ridgetop Walk, 9 km one way, 5 hours one way, DIFFICULT. This walk offers a sense of isolation, great views and interesting plants. Begin at either end and arrange a vehicle return or walk 8 km along the road to your starting point, allow an extra 1.5 hours.

SWIMMING

Swimmers should be aware that most swimming holes are extremely cold. Prolonged exposure, even during summer, can result in hypothermia. Beware of submerged logs and rocks. Be aware during prolonged dry periods the water holes at Trephina Gorge and John Hayes Rock hole can evaporate, leaving only a sandy creek bed.

Guided Talks

Ranger guided talks and walks are conducted from May to August. Visit [https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/activities-parks-community-events](https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/activities-parks-community-events) to view the current program.

Tap into local knowledge - Fit in a discussion with your visit! Park Rangers may be able to provide a short talk to your group on a nominated subject, with enough notice. Contact the Trephina Gorge Ranger Station on 08 8956 9765 to enquire.

Nearby locations

Tie in a visit to one of these nearby locations to get more out of your visit!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arltunga Historical Reserve</td>
<td>The site of Central Australia's first town, born out of a gold rush in 1887.</td>
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<tr>
<td>N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park</td>
<td>The Gorge contains over 430 engraved sites visible within the main gorge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruby Gap Nature Park</td>
<td>A remote park, the site of Central Australia's ‘ruby boom’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corroboree Rock Conservation Area</td>
<td>The impressive dolomite structure here is of great importance to the local Arrernte Aboriginal People.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yepereny / Emily and Jessie Gap Nature Park</td>
<td>The first Gap features to the east, these places are important for the Eastern Arrernte people, part of the caterpillar ‘dreaming trail’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Desert Park</td>
<td>Learn more about the desert’s environments, animals and living culture.</td>
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Need Help? Or more information? Contact the Alice Springs Community Engagement Officer on (08) 8951 8247 OR contact the Trephina Gorge Rangers on (08) 8956 9765. We may be able to contribute ideas towards enhancing your excursion program.