

Little Desert National Park



Visitor Guide – Nga Keenat/Welcome

"Little Desert is a desert in name only. Camp beside the tranquil Wimmera River fringed with River Red Gums, or hike the rolling dunes of the desert. Wide open spaces and peaceful campgrounds make this park a natural treasure, best seen on foot in autumn, winter and spring. The river end is ideal to visit in summer..." - *Ranger In Charge, Alan Braithwaite*



"If we follow Bunjil's law and look after the country then the country will look after us. ...All the rules we have, come from Bunjil. I must pass on Bunjil's law so it continues". The late Uncle Jack Kennedy

Welcome to Country

Through their rich culture the Wotjobaluk People have been intrinsically connected to Country - including the area now known as Victoria and the State's parks and reserves - for tens of thousand of years.

Parks Victoria recognises this connection and acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Communities of these areas.

The Wotjobaluk People welcome and remind us that these sites are part of Australia's heritage, and ask that visitors respect these sites when visiting them. All cultural sites are protected by law.



Walks

The park has a number of marked, signposted walks, ranging from 30 minutes to three days duration. These are in the eastern block of the park, and are accessible by 2WD vehicles.



Self Guided Nature Walks

1. Stringybark Walk - 3 walks, 30min - 1 hour
Located on the Harrow - Nhill Road, this short walk show cases the diversity of Little Desert. A brochure at the start of the walk will guide you.
2. Sanctuary - Keith Hateley Nature Walk - 30min
Start in the picnic area, 10 km south of Kiata. A brochure explains the abundant plant and bird life in this area, including the rarely sighted Malleefowl.

3. Pomponderoo Hill Nature Walk - 30min

This walk is on the park's northern boundary, 4km south of Dimboola. It loops around typical desert vegetation. A lookout gives an excellent view of the park, Wimmera River and the surrounding area.

6. Yanipy Walk

Explore the plant and animal diversity on a self-guided walk around the Yanipy School Reserve.

Campground Walks

4. Kiata Campground

Several tracks start from the campground. Brochures are available at the start of these walks.

5. Horseshoe Bend/Ackle Bend Campgrounds

A short walk that leads to Ackle Bend provides great views of the eastern block, particularly at sunset. Walkers can continue past Ackle Bend and follow the track a further 1km to the river before returning to the campgrounds.



Camping and accommodation

Basic facilities are provided at park camp grounds south of Kiata, Horseshoe Bend and Ackle Bend, south of Dimboola. A fee applies. Bush camping away from the park campgrounds is permitted in the central and western blocks. A range of accommodation options are available at Kaniva, Nhill, Winiam, Dimboola, Goroke and Natimuk.

Location and access

Little Desert National Park is 375km northwest of Melbourne. The western and central blocks may be approached from Kaniva, the central and eastern blocks from Nhill or Kiata, and a good gravel road leads to the Wimmera River section of the eastern block from Dimboola. Similarly, bitumen road access is available from the south via Mitre, Gymbowen, Goroke, Edenhope or Boorookpi.

Once you leave the bitumen, most tracks are very sandy and are suitable for four wheel drive vehicles only.

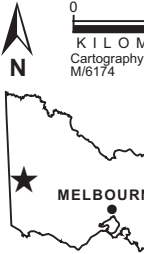


Little Desert National Park

Highway	Gate for Seasonal Road Closures (Seasonal Road Closures apply between mid June and 31 October)	National Park
Sealed road	Other Parks and Reserves	State Forest
Surfaced road	Water body	
Vehicle track (4WD)		
Management track		
Walking track		

Recreational Facilities

Camping	Lookout
Caravan park	Park information
Family walk	Picnic area
Fireplace	Picnic shelter
Fishing	Toilet
	Walk reference number

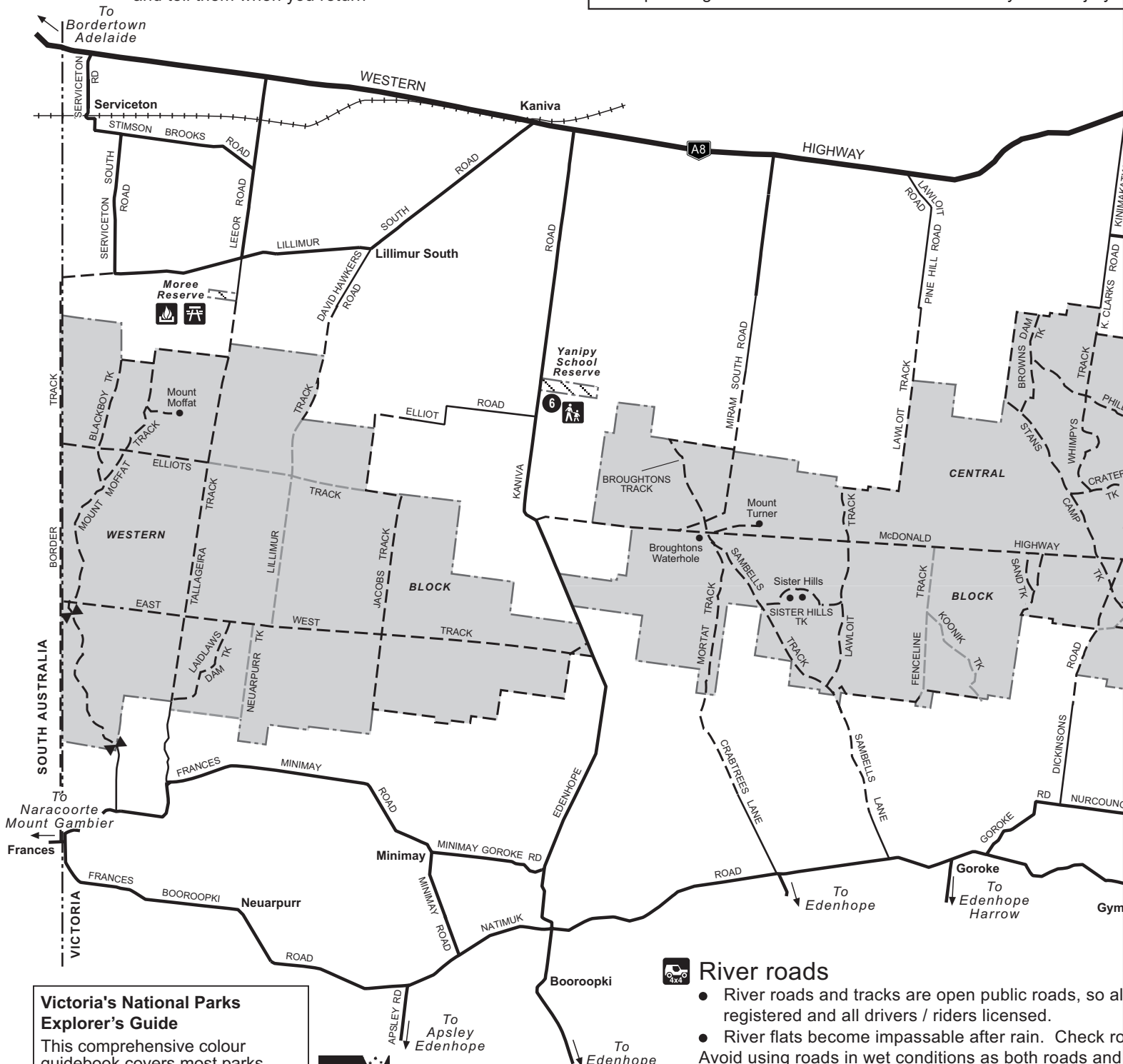


Walkers Beware

- Carry drinking water with you
- A hat and sunscreen are essential in summer
- Keep to the defined tracks - it is easy to become disoriented in the desert
- Let someone responsible know where you plan to go, and tell them when you return

Risk awareness

- Avoid camping under large old River Red Gums. They can drop branches without warning.
- Swimmer beware: deep holes and snags are common in the Wimmera River.
- River cliffs are highly erodable; slumping may occur at any time.
- Rope swings are not recommended. Their use may cause injury.



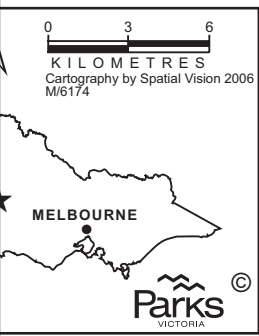
Victoria's National Parks Explorer's Guide

This comprehensive colour guidebook covers most parks. Want to know more? Call 13 1963

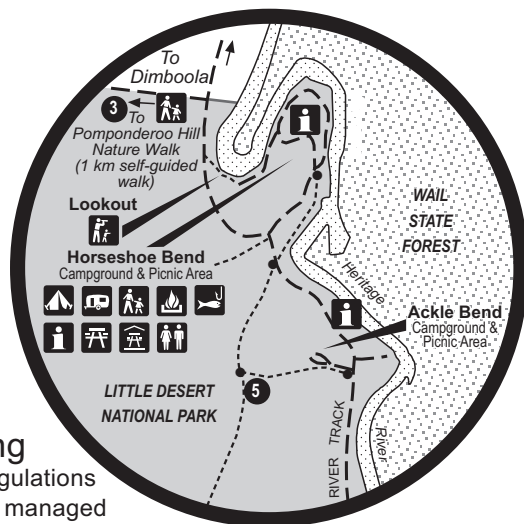
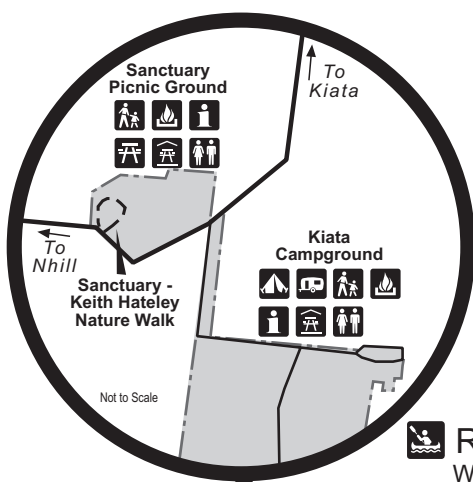


River roads

- River roads and tracks are open public roads, so all registered and all drivers / riders licensed.
- River flats become impassable after rain. Check road conditions. Avoid using roads in wet conditions as both roads and tracks are damaged.



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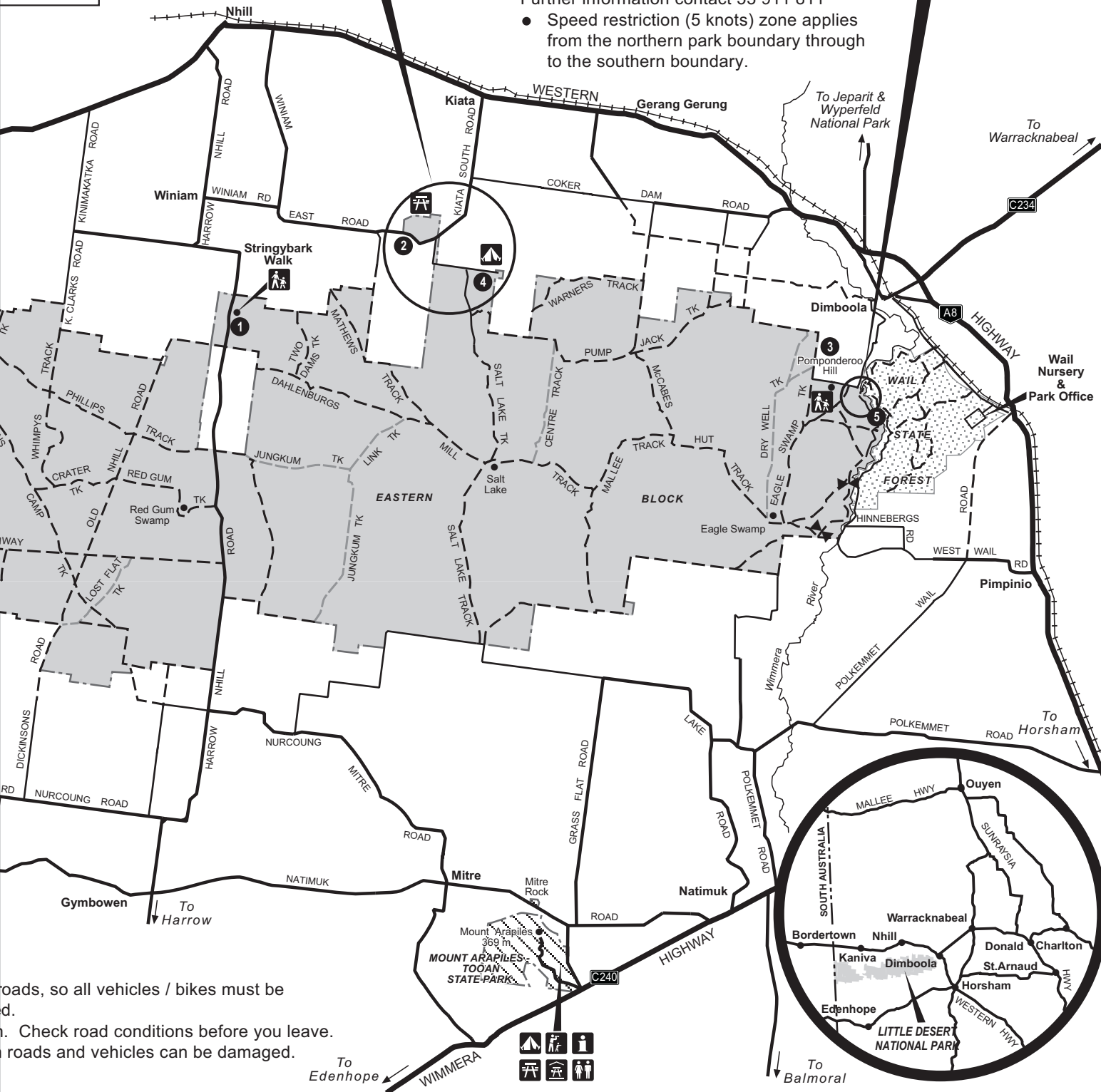


Rivercare & boating

Wimmera River boating regulations and safety procedures are managed by the Hindmarsh Shire.

Further information contact 53 911 811

- Speed restriction (5 knots) zone applies from the northern park boundary through to the southern boundary.



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For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call 13 1963

or visit the

Parks Victoria website

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Little Desert Park Office
Nursery Road, Wail
PO Box 240
Dimboola 3414
Tel: 13 1963

Horsham Visitor
Information Centre
O'Callaghans Parade
Horsham 3400
Tel: (03) 5382 3778

Reference: *Defending the Little Desert – the rise of ecological consciousness in Australia.*

Libby Robin

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

Please take rubbish away with you for recycling & disposal

All native plants & animals are protected by law.

Please do not disturb them in any way

Light fires only in fireplaces where provided. Gas or fuel stoves are preferred

No fires (including barbecues, gas or fuel stoves in tents) may be lit on a day of **Total Fire Ban**.

Little Desert National Park is in the **North Western Total Fire Ban District**.

Firearms, generators and chainsaws are prohibited

Please keep to designated roads and tracks

Mobile Phones

You may not be in network range in some areas of the park. To connect to Police, Ambulance or CFA, even if out of your mobile network,

key in 112 then press the YES key

Caring for Country

For thousands of years, the rich waters of the Wimmera River and woodlands of the Wimmera and Mallee plains sustained the people of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk tribes.

The Wimmera River was important for the survival of these people, as they relied on it to provide them with food, water, tools and shelter. As Traditional Owners these tribes were the custodians of the land and they effectively practiced what equates in many ways to the concept of sustainable land management.

Caring for Country is the fabric of Indigenous social, spiritual, economic and physical wellbeing and is the basis of their cultural lore.

As descendants of the original inhabitants of the Wimmera region, many members of the claim group can trace their ancestry back to the area prior to European settlement. The arrival of the first European squatters saw the traditional lifestyle of Victoria's Indigenous people severely affected. Introduced disease, conflict and religious fervour reduced their population drastically, changing Australia's history forever.

These descendants can also be traced back to the people who lived on the Ebenezer Mission, north of Dimboola, established in the 1860s.

Despite the impact of European settlement, the members of the claim group remain an identifiable community that has maintained some of its traditional law and custom in part of the claim area.

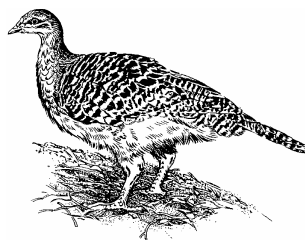
Growth of a national park

The Kiata Lowan Sanctuary was created in 1955; 217 hectares being set-aside for the preservation of the Malleefowl (or Lowan). This was increased to 945 hectares in 1968 and declared as the Little Desert National Park.

At the same time, the Government announced that 80,000 hectares of the desert would be sub - divided and cleared for agriculture. The economic viability of the scheme was seriously questioned. It was argued that in the long term, the land would be more valuable in its natural state. The plan was abandoned, and in December 1969 the park was increased to 35,300 hectares.

In 1986 the Land Conservation Council, established by the government to advise on the use of public land, recommended an increase in size of the Little Desert National Park. The addition of the central and western block to the existing eastern block increased the Park to its present size of 132,000 hectares.

Declaration took place in May 1988. The park now extends from the Wimmera River in the east to the South Australian border.



This park is one of the last strongholds of the endangered Malleefowl. Under threat from predation by foxes and loss of habitat its future depends on your understanding and support.

Co-operative Management of the Park

The Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation entered into the first indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) in Victoria with the Victorian and Australian Governments which was registered in November 2005.

Among other things, a co-operative agreement ensures that the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk peoples will be able to continue to Care for Country by being involved in the management of the area's where their native title rights have been recognised.

Rich with plants and wildlife

The parks' differing soil types give rise to a varied and diverse range of vegetation, alive with wildlife and spring wildflowers. It makes a significant contribution to Australia's biodiversity. More than 670 species of native plants can be found in the Little Desert. Birdwatchers will find much of interest, over 220 bird species have been recorded in the park. Brush - tailed Possums, kangaroos, bats and many different kinds of reptiles can also be seen. Stumpy -tailed Lizards and Bearded Dragons may often be observed basking in the sun.



Yellow-winged Honeyeater on Silver Banksia

"To be with someone who has not seen virgin scrub makes you realise its value. It makes you think of the future" - Avelyn Coutts, Kaniva.



Long distance - the Desert Discovery Walk

A separate brochure is available for this walk. Overnight walkers are asked to register their details in advance at the Park Office. There are two overnight camps along the way, accessible only by walkers.

This walk is a great opportunity to experience some of the park's diversity on foot. It is especially colourful in spring.



Exploring the Region

Be sure to visit your nearest Visitor Information Centre to find out more about local parks, tour and guide opportunities for the area.

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