

# Gawler Ranges National Park



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People



## Gawler Ranges National Park

Gawler Ranges National Park is located in South Australia's spectacular southern Gawler Ranges, approximately six hours drive north-west from Adelaide. The 166 000 ha reserve is 40 km north of the Eyre Highway and is accessible via the road from Iron Knob, Kimba, Wudinna or Minnipa. Services are not available in the park and water is a scarce commodity. Visitors must provide for their own needs for the duration of their stay including adequate water, fuel and firewood.

The park comprises the former Paney Station, and areas of Pine Lodge and Scrubby Peak stations. Paney was one of the earliest pastoral holdings in the Gawler Ranges. The name, which was given by Stephen Hack in 1857, is thought to be of Aboriginal origin.

### A scenic landscape

The scenic Gawler Ranges consists of volcanic rock hills over 1500 million years old. The extensive exposure of volcanic rhyolite known as organ pipes, is one of the largest in the world. The vast hill and gully complexes, with rocky gorges and seasonal water flows, create a stunning landscape of natural beauty.

Many of the hills in the park are over 400 metres above sea level with Nukey Bluff the highest peak at 465 metres. Ancient rivers defined a well-developed drainage system but alluvial material has now filled these valleys to considerable depths. There are no permanent streams in the park.

In the south of the park (and in the 130 000 ha Pinkawillinie Conservation Park which adjoins to the south) are old dune ridges, which are common over much of upper Eyre Peninsula.

## Seasonal conditions

The climate of the Gawler Ranges is mild to hot in summer and cool to cold in winter with low, unreliable rainfall (mean annual rainfall is 295 mm). Mean daily maximum temperatures range from 34°C in summer to 19°C during winter. The best time of year to visit the park is in winter and spring.

### Aboriginal history

Little information is available concerning Aboriginal occupation and use of the Gawler Ranges area. At the time of European settlement in South Australia, the Wirangu and Parnkalla (or Pankala) peoples occupied the Gawler Ranges. The Wirangu were to the west of Lake Acraman and the Parnkalla's lands extended east to Mount Brown and south-east to Franklin Harbor. The Parnkalla included two groups. One of these groups, the Malkaripangala, lived in the Gawler Ranges area.

Pastoralism displaced Aboriginal people from their traditional lands, many going to the government depot at Fowers Bay and others to Port Lincoln.



Crimson Mallee  
*Eucalyptus lansdowneana*  
var *lansdowneana*

## Pastoral history

The explorer Edward John Eyre was the first European to visit the Gawler Ranges in September 1839. He named the ranges after George Gawler, then governor of South Australia. Although it was spring, Eyre had difficulty finding water, even under the very high rocky ranges. It was in the southern Gawler Ranges that Eyre first saw Sturts Desert Pea *Swainsona formosus*: "... a most splendid creeping plant ... and very beautiful".

Eyre was not impressed with the country, but pastoralists did take up land here after Stephen Hack's survey of the ranges.

Paney became a pastoral property in the early 1850s but the first official lessees were Andrew M. Wooldridge and John Hirst in 1864. It was a successful pastoral partnership, aided by the discovery of a good supply of fresh water in 1865.

A police camp was established near Old Paney homestead in about 1864 but was transferred to Yardea in 1871.

Pastoralism in the region improved after the erection of a vermin-proof fence around Yardea, Thurlga, Paney, Pondanna, Yarloo and part of Mount Ive stations.

Paney became part of James G. Moseley's Yardea station in 1904 and was later incorporated into Thurlga before being separated in 1977. Paney, along with the smaller Pine Lodge and a section of Scrubby Peak Station in the north-west, was proclaimed as Gawler Ranges National Park in January 2002.

## Visiting the park

Entry and camping permits are required in Gawler Ranges National Park. Permits are available from self registration stations within the park. Fees collected are used for conservation and to maintain and improve park facilities for your ongoing enjoyment.

Visitors should keep to designated tracks (as shown on the map). The majority of tracks within the park are recommended for high clearance 4WD vehicles only. However, high ground clearance 2WD vehicles may access some areas. All tracks and roads can become impassable in wet conditions. Avoid vehicle travel when conditions are wet.

Bush camping is available in designated areas within the park. Minimal facilities are provided. Small camp fires are permitted in designated areas except when fire bans apply. Wood fires are prohibited during the Fire Danger Season usually 1 November to 31 March. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361. Visitors must not collect firewood from within the park. Chainsaws are prohibited.

## Exploring the park

The dramatic scenic beauty, abundant wildlife and seasonal wildflowers attract many visitors to the Gawler Ranges. The park and surrounding district offers excellent touring opportunities for high ground clearance 2WD and 4WD vehicles, and includes features such as Mount Wudinna, the Organ Pipes and Lake Gairdner.

Other activities include camping, bushwalking and passive nature study. Guided adventure tours are also operated privately in the Gawler Ranges. Permission must be obtained prior to entering or camping on neighbouring pastoral leases.

There are currently no marked walking trails in the Gawler Ranges National Park. Bushwalkers going on long walks must notify a responsible person of their route and anticipated time of return. Be sure to wear protective clothing, and take a suitable map, compass, first aid kit, food and adequate water with you.

## Flora and fauna

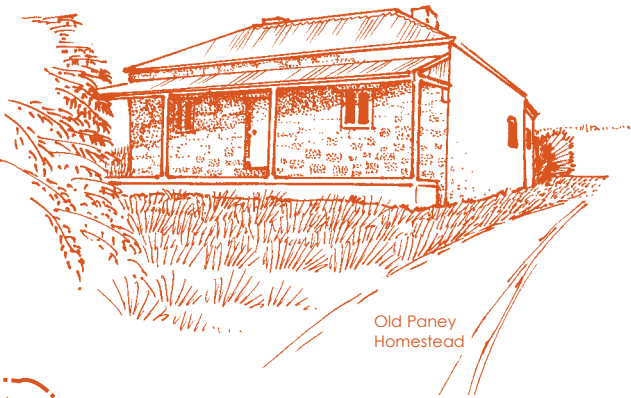
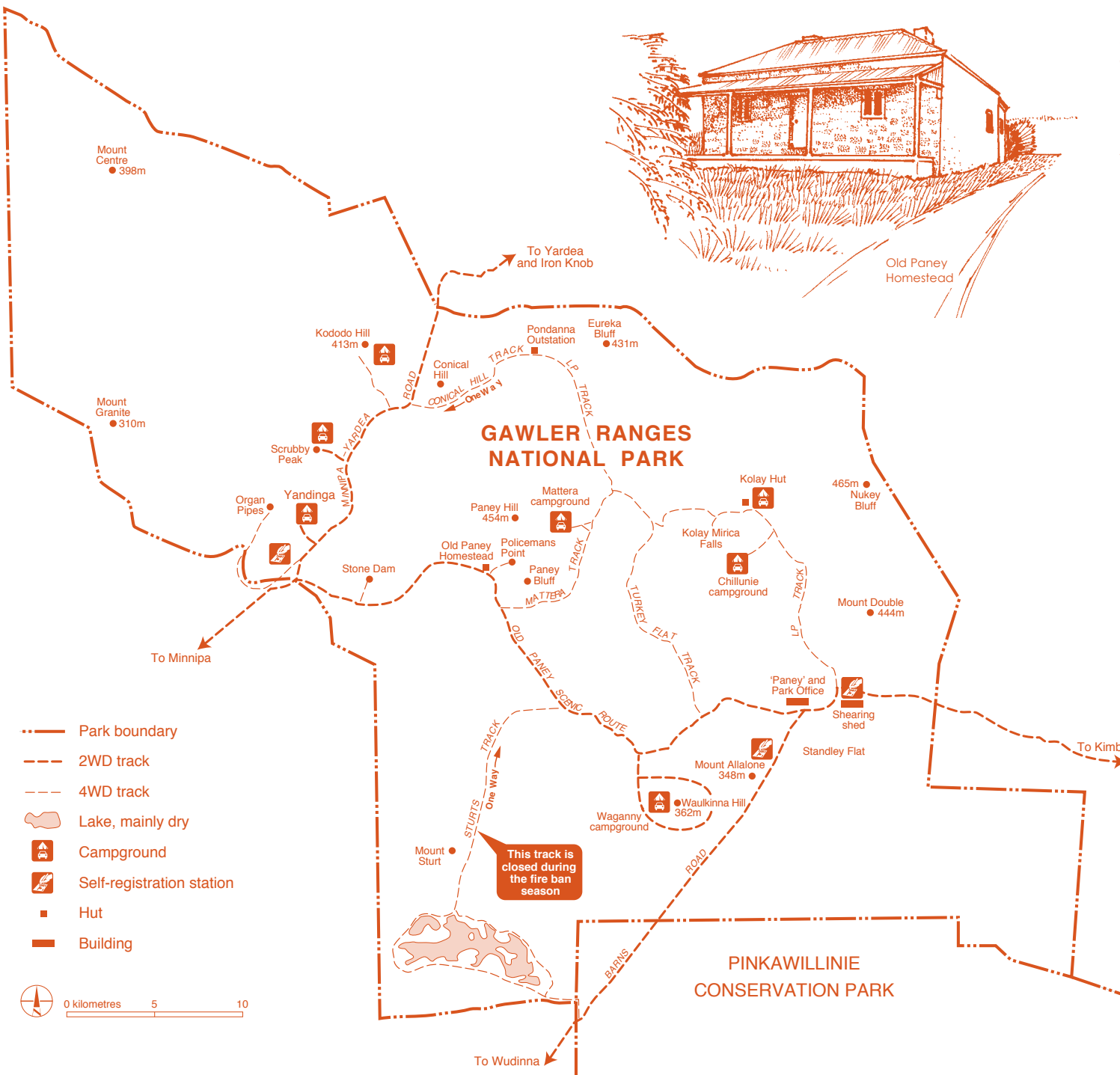
The dramatic variations of habitat and land system types that occur within the park make the area home for many species of fauna, including a particularly diverse bird life. The area is an interface between the Eyre Peninsula mallee country and the drier arid zone to the north of the ranges. Plants and animals from both zones occur in the Gawler Ranges.

The park is home to about twenty-one rare and threatened species including the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby, Central Long-eared Bat, Sandhill Dunnart, Malleefowl, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Honey Myrtle, Woolly Spinifex, and the locally endemic Crimson Mallee.

Surveys have recorded over 400 different native plants and animals including 225 plant, 33 reptile, 3 frog, 126 bird and 18 mammal species.



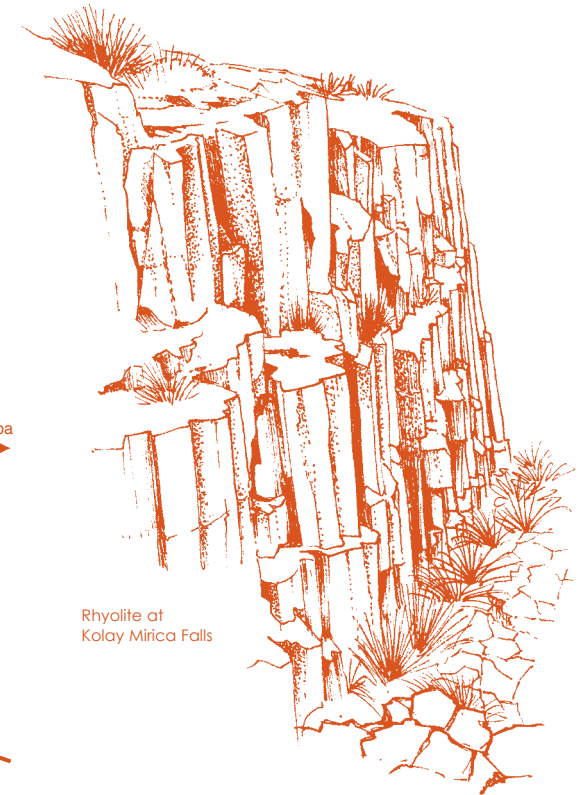
Malleefowl  
*Leipoa ocellata*



## Sites of interest

Historic sites in the park include the Old Paney Homestead, Policemans Point precinct, Stone Dam, and Pondanna Outstation, where agriculture was attempted early last century. The Friends of Gawler Ranges National Park have restored the house at Pondanna Outstation and this house is now available for hire. For more information and bookings, phone (08) 8680 2090.

Notable landmarks include Paney Bluff, Mount Allalone, Mount Sturt, Conical Hill and Scrubby Peak. Other scenic sites of interest include Kolay Mirica Falls, The Organ Pipes and Yandinga Gorge.

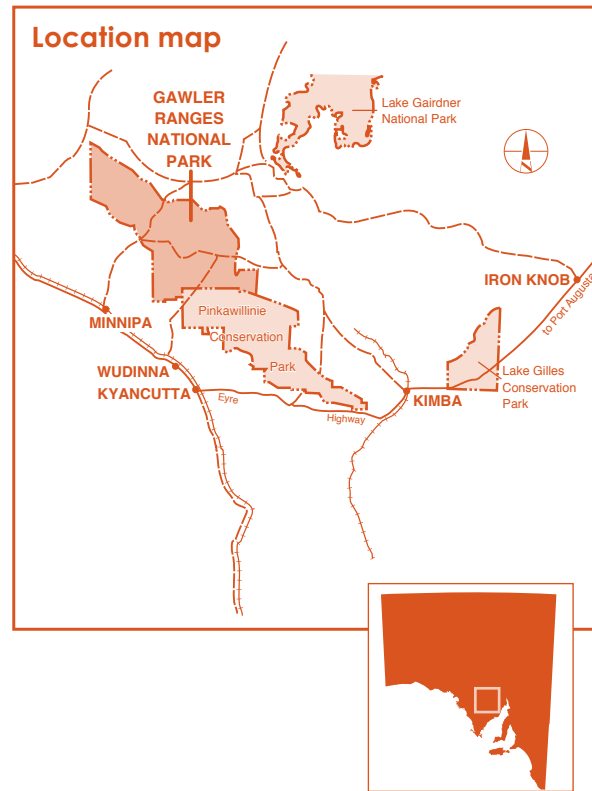


## The National Parks Code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions, usually 1 November to 31 March. Check CFS Hotline 1300 362 361.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas stoves.
- Respect geological and heritage sites.
- Keep wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Be considerate of other park users.

**Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.**



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Cover: Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, *Cacatua leadbeateri*  
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Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby  
*Petrogale xanthopus*