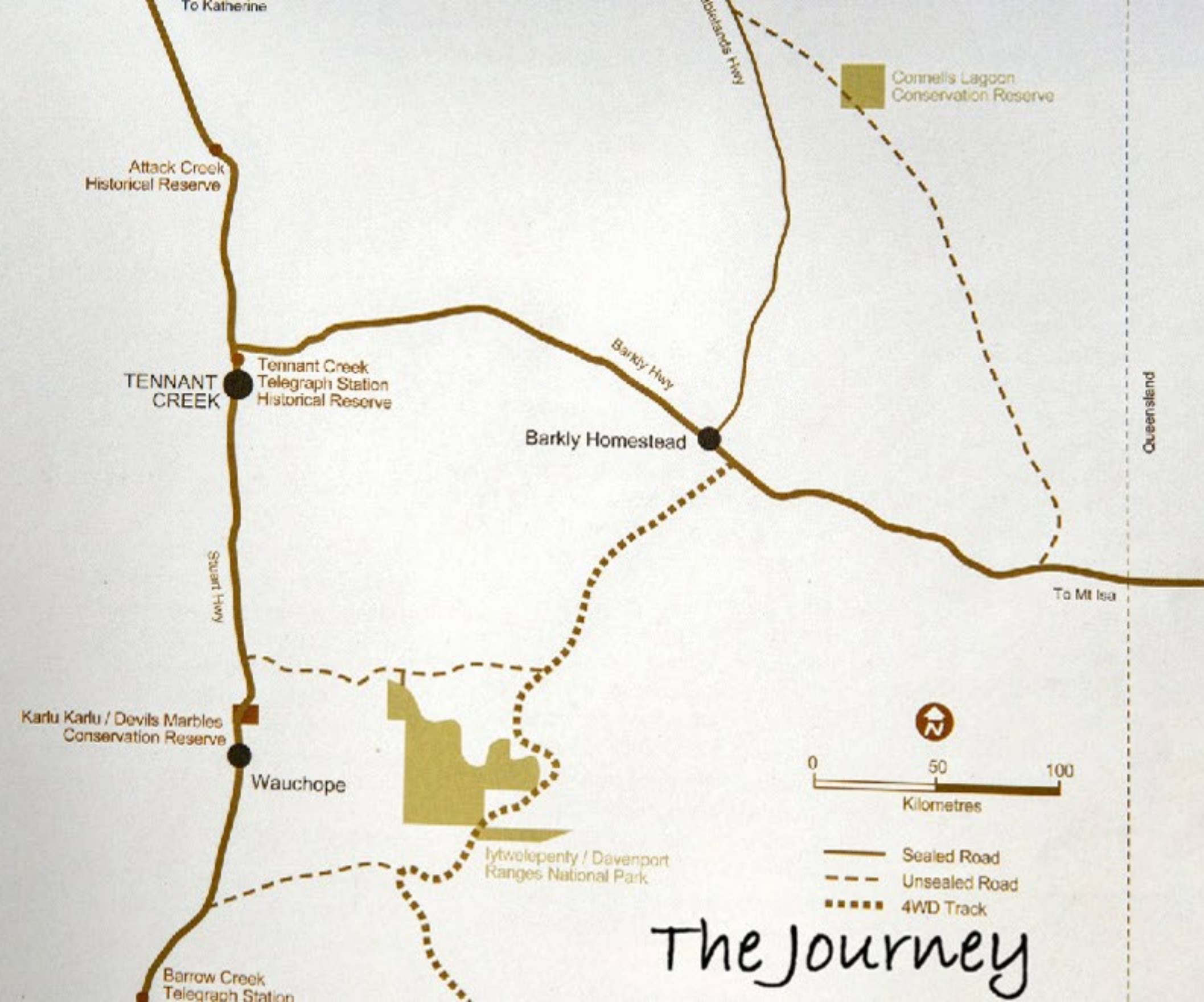


The Northern Territory trip

The Northern Territory



The Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory occupies about one sixth of Australia's total land mass some 142 million Hectares, with a population of about 200,000 and is home to some of the natural world's most unique and exciting destinations.

The Northern Territory has six main destinations. From the red sandy desert of Alice Springs and Uluru / Ayers Rock and the golden plains of Tennant Creek, to the savannah woodlands surrounding Katherine and the lush green tropics of Darwin and Kakadu, it's not surprising the Northern Territory is a popular destination for travellers keen to experience Australia's outback.

The Northern Territory is known around the world for the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks. It also has lots of other attractions Alice Springs, The Larapinta Trail, Palm Valley, Kings Canyon, Devils Marbles and much much more.

The Northern Territory has 2 seasons the Wet and the Dry, i have only been in the dry season as the roads can be cut off due to large amounts of rainfall swelling the rivers. But this year i am going on the Ghan towards the end of the wet season.

The Equipment.

My vehicle is a Toyota pop top camper with dual 90 litre fuel tanks , a 50 litre water tank.

The vehicle can sleep four people with the roof extended, it has a cooker, sink, fridge, storage cupboards for food utensils and clothing.

The vehicle has a 150 watt solar panel and a 2000 watt inverter for 240 volt power, it also has dual batteries so as to keep the fridge going day and night.

I have recovery equipment consisting of a snatch strap, high lift jack, Max trax, long handled shovel and an exhaust air jack.

Safety equipment is a first aid kit, fire blanket, 2 fire extinguishers one at the front and one at the back, a satellite phone and UHF radio.



The Stuart Highway

Darwin is about 1600km north of Alice Springs on the Stuart highway, once a dirt track that ran along the Overland Telegraph line. The Stuart highway was named after Scottish explorer John McDouall Stuart who, in 1862, became the first man to successfully cross Australia from south to north and make it back alive.

The track was made bitumen during the second world war, the Stuart Highway is now a two lane bitumen highway that links the Southern Ocean to the Timor Sea.

About 30 km north of town, you cross the Tropic of Capricorn. For the rest of the drive, you're in the tropics, though the landscape doesn't change for quite a while.





Native Gap / Arulta Atwarte

Native Gap Conservation Reserve is approximately 115 km north of Alice Springs on the western side of the Stuart Highway.

Left; Tropic of Capricorn

Top left; Native Gap.

Top right; Native Gap Aboriginal sign

Bottom Right; The back of the Hann Ranges.

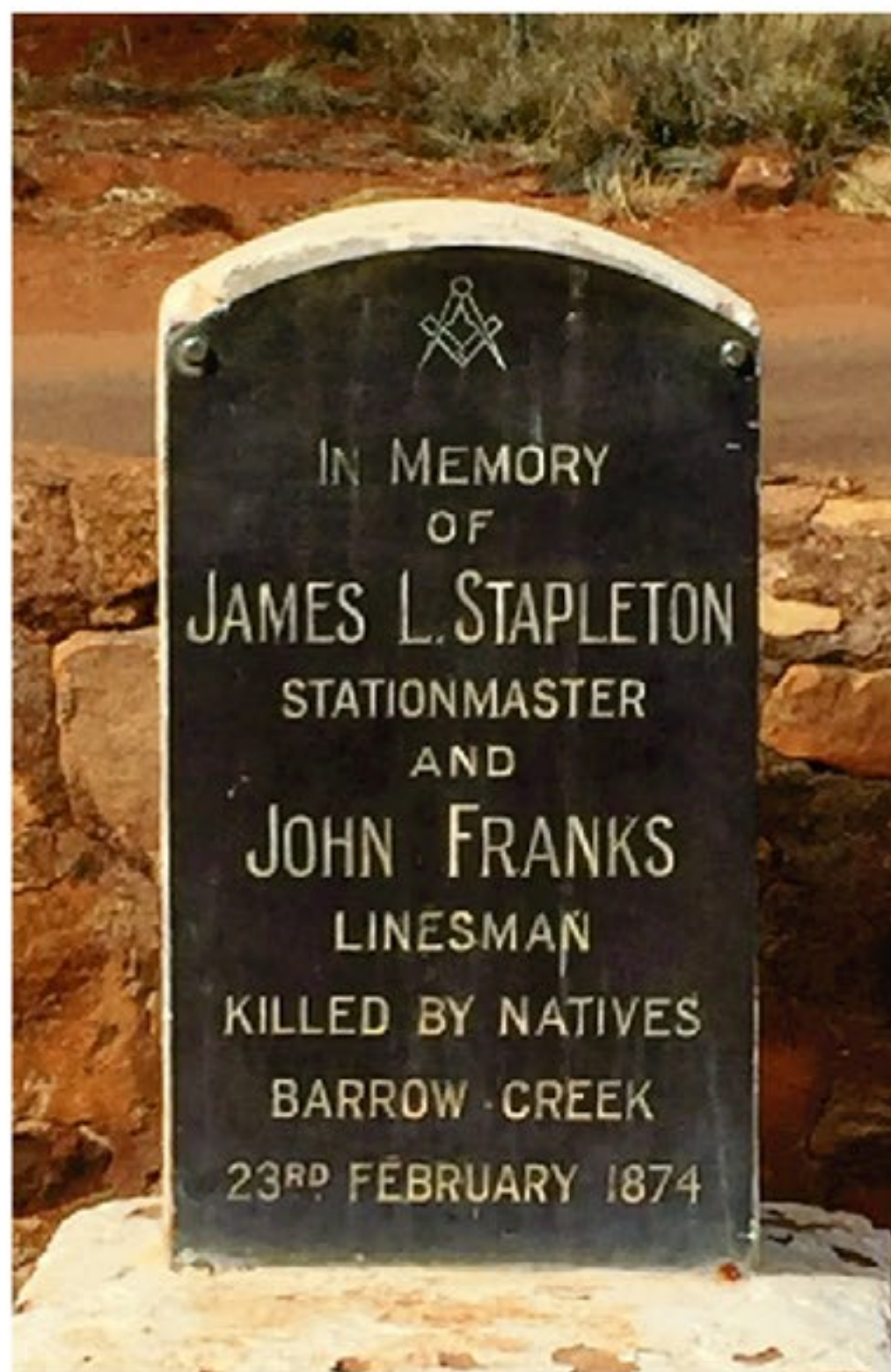


Barrow Creek

Barrow Creek was built in 1872 as a repeater station for the Overland Telegraph from Adelaide to Darwin. The stone Telegraph Station, complete with tuck pointing on the walls, was built that year. It suggests permanence. Today it can be inspected. The keys are held at the pub.

Two years later in February 1874 the local Aborigines attacked the Telegraph Station and Stapleton and Franks (one was the stationmaster and the other was the linesman) were killed. When the station had been built it was assumed that if an attack occurred it would come from the west. In reality the Kaytetye Aborigines attacked from the hills at the east and neither Stapleton nor Franks could get to the main courtyard. As a result of the killings major reprisals occurred and it is estimated that some 50 or 60 Aborigines were killed at Skull Creek, many of them having nothing to do with the attack on the station. This is known as the Skull Creek massacre.





Barrow Creek

For most of its history Barrow Creek has been an isolated and tiny outpost on the Stuart Highway north of Alice Springs. Then, on 14 July 2001, it became a vital part of one of the Australian outback's most horrific and mystifying crimes. On the night of 14 July, Bradley John Murdoch stopped a VW Kombi van driven by English traveller, Peter Falconio, and persuaded Falconio to leave the vehicle, shot him, tied up Falconio's girlfriend Joanne Lees who, miraculously, managed to escape, hide in the scrub along the highway, and was eventually picked up by a truck driver who took her 13 km south to the Barrow Creek pub where the police were alerted. I met a policeman that haad worked on this case in the Simpson Desert, he told me that Bradley John Murdoch was transporting drugs through the outback.



Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles

The Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles are approx 393 km north of Alice Springs on the Stuart Highway. I can find no explanation of why they are called the Devils Marbles.

In John Lewis's 1872 account of the building of the telegraph line, they passed through "extraordinary shaped stones" in the Davenport Ranges. "The country was of granite formation and many stones were round like marbles," Lewis wrote. "In fact they were called Devils Marbles".

Somebody called this the Devil's country; he's even emptied his bag of marbles around the place!

The Aboriginal name Karlu Karlu means round boulders.

The Devils Marbles are a collection of large granite boulders which were covered in sandstone and pushed up through the earth's surface, over time the sandstone has washed away leaving the granite boulders up to 6 metres high and perched on top of each other.

The Warumungu Aboriginal people believe they are the fossilised eggs of the Rainbow Serpent.

In 1953 an eight ton rock was removed from the Devils Marbles and placed in Alice Springs at John Flynn's memorial. In 1999 after several requests from the Warumungu people the rock was returned to the Devils Marbles.





How the Devils Marbles Formed

We passed through extraordinary shaped stones in the Davenport Range. The country was of granite formation and many of these stones were round like marbles. In fact they were called Devils Marbles.

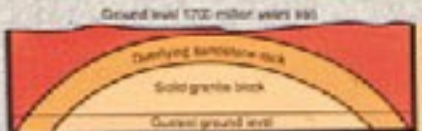
From an account by John Lewis during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line in 1872. This is the first recorded use of the name 'Devils Marbles'.

The spectacular arrangements of boulders that make up the Devils Marbles are, in fact, the result of a looking down rather than a looking up of rocks.

The marbles are remnants from a solid mass of granite, the bulk of which still lies underneath them.



Geomorphologists have developed an interesting analogy for the different shapes and arrangements of granite boulders. Unlike boulders, which are scattered, boulders are arranged in a regular pattern of circles.



1. Around 1700 million years ago, molten magma squeezed through ancient sandstones of the earth's crust and cooled into hard granite rock, the Devils Marbles Granite.



2. Shrinkage as the granite cooled and pressures within the earth caused right angled patterns of cracks called joints to form. As the overlying rocks were eroded by wind and water, the granite came to be closer to the surface.



3. Groundwater filtered down along the joints and reacted with some of the minerals in the granite to form clays. This process, called weathering, was helped by a warm, humid climate. Weathering was greatest at the corners of the blocks, where more surfaces were exposed.

Karlwekarlwe / Karlu Karlu

A Sacred Meeting Place

This spectacular area of enormous round rocks is an important meeting place and rich in dreaming sites for local Aboriginal people.

During times of war and peace the men would high up on the rocks. Karluwekarlwe, Karluwekarlwe and Karluwekarlwe people would sleep here and drink here on their tracks around the water. All our Aboriginal people have strong connections to this place.

Karlwekarlwe in the Dreamtime

This is a really secret place. I've done ceremonies here. It's a secret place. You have to keep it well. A Senior Traditional Owner.

The literal meaning of Karlwekarlwe is round objects but to local Aboriginal people this name means much more than that. Karlwekarlwe country is extremely rich in dreaming sites, places where special events happened in the Gnyawne Wintjirne or Dreamtime.

Most of the stories of these dreamings are kept secret. Only the appropriate Aboriginal people can know them.

A public version of the Karuwympe, a mystical women's dreaming, is told here for visitors.

Kuwerympe / Munga Munga Dreaming: A women's dreaming story

Two Kuwerympe ladies were travelling from Munga Munga (near Tennant Creek) to Karluwekarlwe in the dreaming time. Kiyalye and Amalyaye women from the south met together with these Kuwerympe ladies at Karluwekarlwe. Here they made a big ceremony. They were sharing each other their dreaming stories. All these Kuwerympe ladies were white people came. Aboriginal people made big ceremonies here about their Kuwerympe. A Senior Traditional Owner.

The dreaming is still here

Aboriginal people believe that people from the dreaming at Karluwekarlwe live in the caves under the rocks here.

They're real people like us. You can see them. A long time ago I went with my husband down to the creek here to get some water. One of these secret people came out and started playing with me. I couldn't go away.

My mother came and got me, and me, and me. But we never came out of this place again, never. They're like these secret people, and they can make you mad. They can change you into one of them. They can say, 'I want me', and you can't go back.

It happened like that for my cousin. He disappeared. The old people made a big ceremony, singing the ground and the rocks to make them let my cousin come back. I've lost that song now. We've got no song to let children back. A Senior Traditional Owner.

Sunrise at Karlu Karlu Devils Marbles







Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles

Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve is 1802 hectares in size, the piles of granite boulders offer a variety of habitats for flora and fauna.

Top left; Dingo in the morning sun.

Bottom right; Ghost gum among the rocks

Bottom Left; A granite rock split in two.



Sunset at Karlu Karlu Devils Marbles



Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park

The Davenport Ranges National Park (Iytwellepenty) is 1,120 square kilometres of the Davenport Range, North East of Alice Springs.

We left the Devils marbles and headed north on the Stuart highway to the davenport ranges national park turnoff, a sign indicates a 50km drive along a well graded dirt road to Kurundi station, then there's another 18km of winding gravel and sand to the turn off to the 1120sq.km national park.

24 kilometres of narrow track across sparsely vegetated plains before you arrive at the small waterhole Whistle Duck Creek, the creek and waterholes are a haven for birds and wildlife.





Welcome to Irrmweng Rockhole

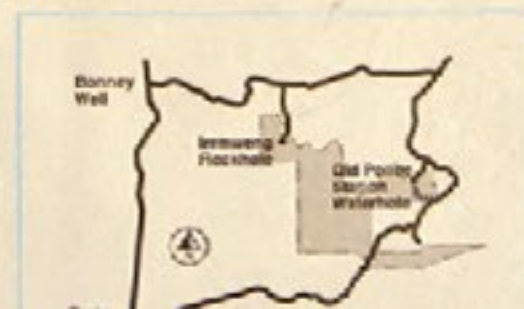
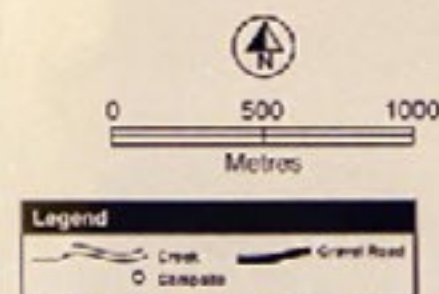
A shady refuge of the Davenport Range

Welcome to Irrmweng (pronounced Ear-moong-a) Rockhole, one of the many waterholes which make the Davenport Range among the best-watered ranges in central Australia.

The wetter, more tropical climate of the Davenport Range sustains some tropical as well as desert plants. You can see both types of plants in and around the creek here.

This unusual range of plants has provided a rich variety of food for Aboriginal people.

The area around Whistleduck creek is Waramungu country.

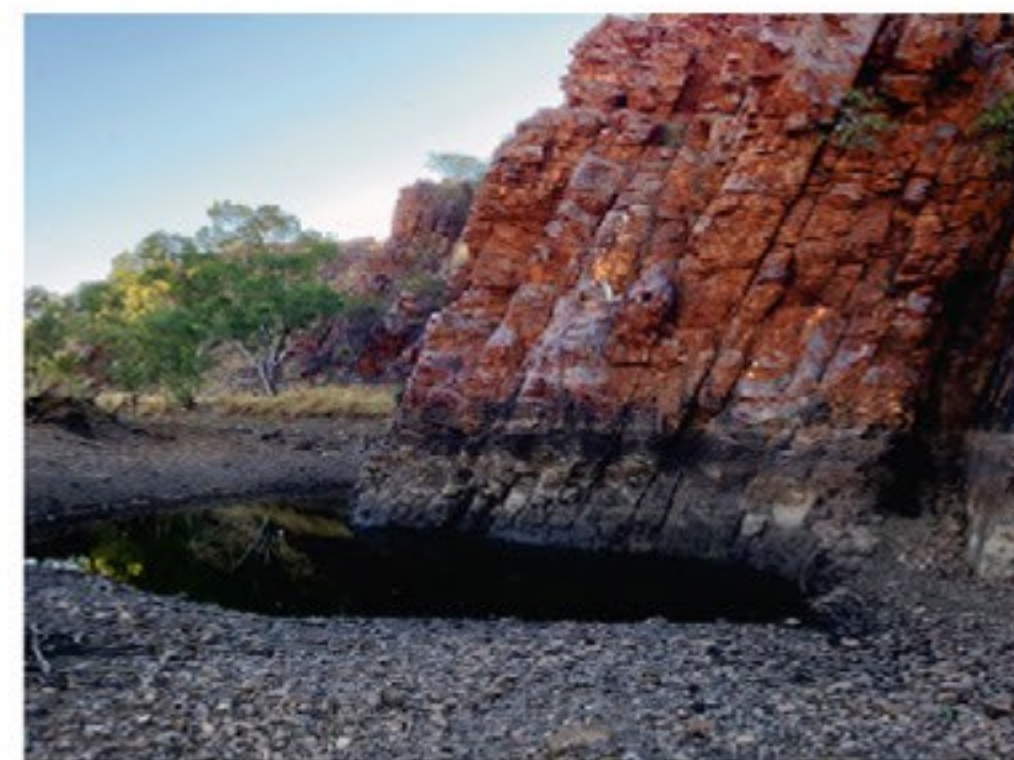


Irrmweng Rockhole

Top left; Warning sign in the Davenport ranges.

Bottom left; Waterhole.

Top Right; Waterhole.



Aboriginal People of the Davenport Range

A good living

The reliable water and wide variety of plants and animals in the Davenport Range provided a good living for Aboriginal people for thousands of years. During dry times, the waterholes here were vital refuges for these people.

Aboriginal elders remember travelling around the ranges when they were young, living on freshwater crabs, frogs, lizards, and larger game like echidna, emu and wallaby.

Rainmakers

Waramungu people know the area around Whistleduck Creek as Rain Dreaming country. Rain ceremonies are held at special sites here.

When the country is dry and the waterholes are down, special men can paint themselves with ochre and perform ceremonies to make rain.

Ilapatuk, or Lame Tommy, was well known for his prowess as a rainmaker, both to Aboriginal people and European pastoralists of the 1930s.

Prized echidna (hag), introduced their (sic) were often hunted at night, when they could be heard scraping around and burrowing into and nests.



To make seed cakes, wattle or grass seeds are crushed with stones and mixed with water to a mushy paste. The mixture is then poured on to a bark plate and put in the sun to cook. Nanyem (pronounced Nanyem), Acacia catechu, provided abundant supplies of wattle seed in good seasons here.



To get crabs (hag), pronounced 'ick-er', you walk along the creek bed and look for their holes. Then you dig them up - You've got to be careful they don't get your hand!

Niyawun Elder

Ceremonies to maintain the country

For Aboriginal people, the rich resources of the Davenport Range are not just here for the taking. Supplies of animals and plants, and also natural events like rain, need to be maintained with special ceremonies at certain places.

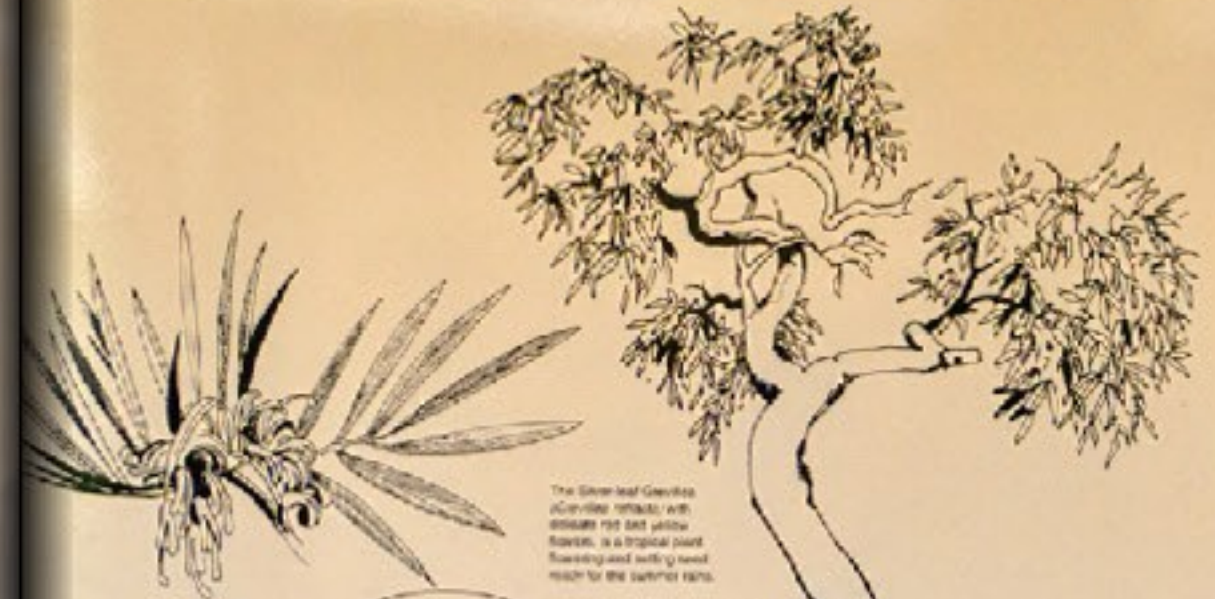
Increase ceremonies for each important animal and plant, and events like rain, involve special songs and dances.

We don't forget. We still use those

A Tropical Influence in the Desert

The plants and animals of the Davenport Range

The population of Northern Riverine Warblers (Siphogaster unicolor) in the Davenport Range is among the most southern for this species. Niyawun Elder, Niyawun Elder, Niyawun Elder.



The Green-leafed Grevillea (Grevillea robusta) with its dense red and yellow flowers, is a tropical plant flowering and setting seed much for the summer rains.



The Central Plains Round Mouse (Pseudomys orbicularis), first recorded in 1900, is known only from the Davenport and Murchison Ranges and one other locality to the north. This mouse is known to be hunted by carrying them in its mouth and hanging them in a heap near the entrance.

Thick, pungent, a typical central desert species, is found along the creek here.

The branches of tropical Grevillea (Grevillea robusta) are easily snapped into pieces for firewood. Aboriginal name: Niyawun (pronounced Niyawun).

A meeting place for plants

The dry, rocky slopes of the Davenport Range are the realm mainly of desert plants. However, in the wetter areas, particularly in and around creeks, tropical plants are common. The Davenport Range marks the southern extent of the distribution of many of these tropical plants.

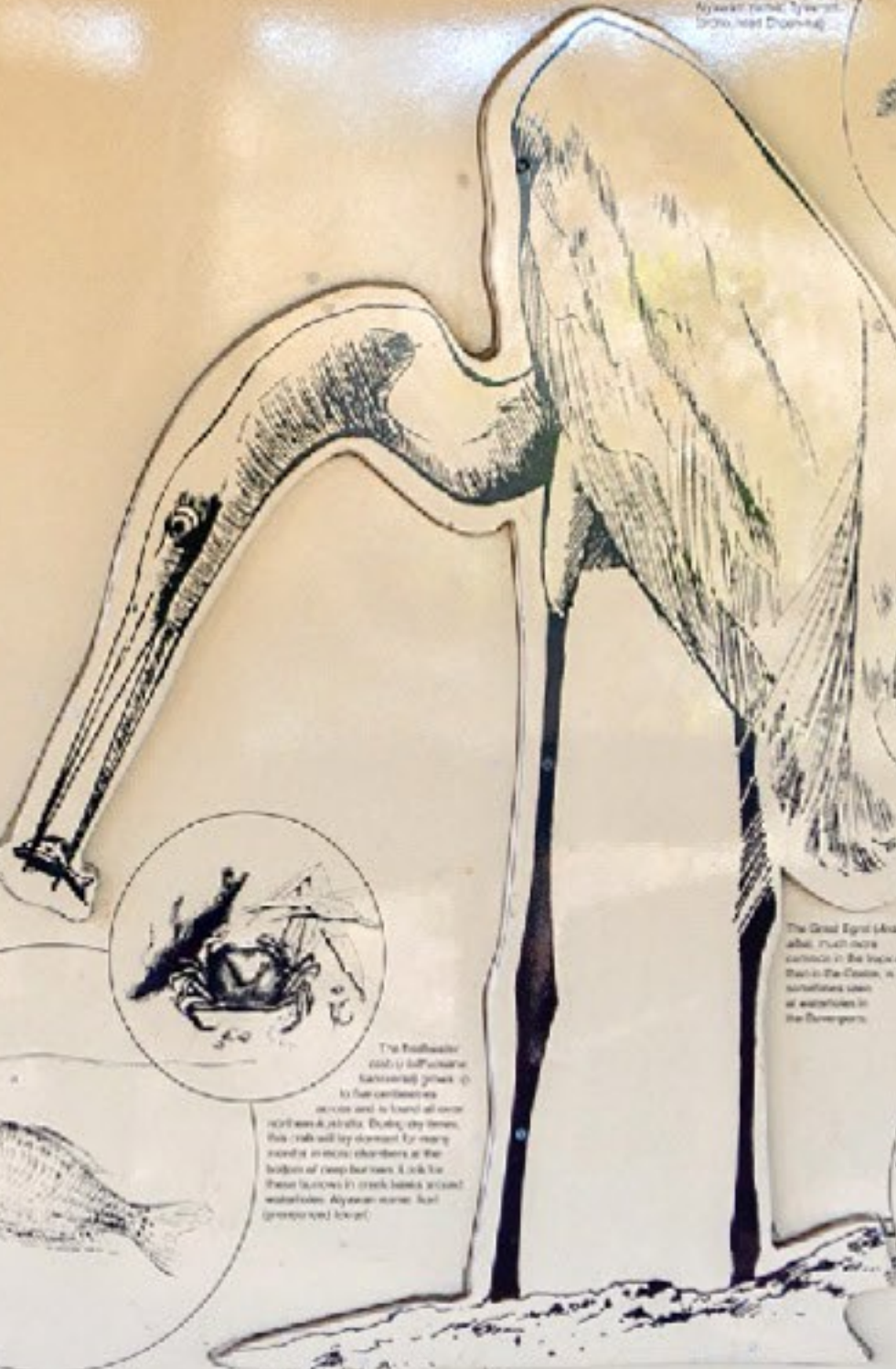
The silky coating on the leaves of Gully Wattle (Acacia greggii) is a typical desert adaptation to reduce water loss. This plant is also known as Raging Broom Bush. Aboriginal name: Niyawun (pronounced Niyawun).

The blue and yellow Gully Wattle (Acacia greggii) is a desert variety of a tropical species of bush.



The Bullshark fish is a common species in the Davenport Range. It is a large, powerful fish that can grow to over 200 cm in length. During dry times, this fish will lay dormant for many months in some shallow areas at the bottom of deep barrows. Look for these barrows in creek banks around waterholes. Aboriginal name: Niyawun (pronounced Niyawun).

The Great Egret (Ardea alba) is a common bird in the Davenport Range. It is a large, white bird with a long neck and legs. It is often seen at waterholes in the Davenport Range.



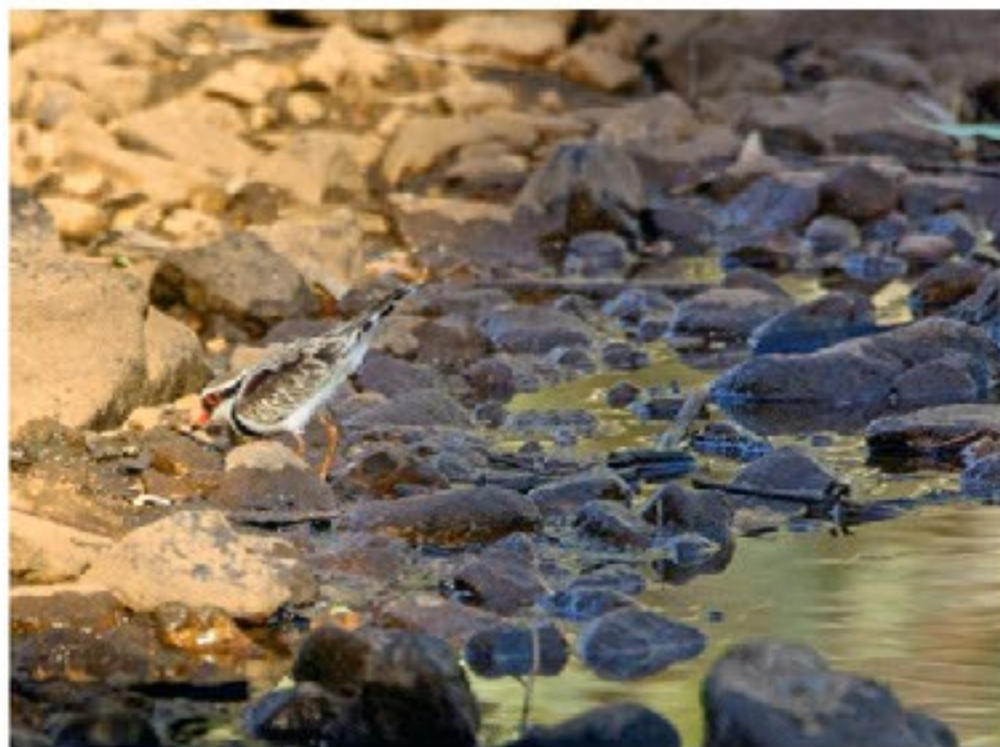


Whistle Duck Creek

Top left; The Track leading to Whistle Duck Creek was overgrown due to not many visitors, on arrival it was well worth the effort to get there.

Bottom left; Double barred bird

Top Right; White plumed honey eaters, come for a drink.



Whistle Duck Creek

Top left; Dragon fly.

Bottom left; Woodswallows cooling off.

Top Right; A Kite raptor.





Tennant Creek

In 1872 a temporary Overland telegraph repeater station was built. Two years later a stone building was completed 11 km to the north of the town, it was closed down in 1979 and currently operates as a museum.

Top left; The Overland Telegraph station.

Top right; The Overland Telegraph station outhouses.

Bottom left; The new Ghan Railway line.





Daly Waters Pub

Daly Waters was named by John Stuart on his 3rd attempt at crossing Australia from the south to the north, he reached the springs and named them Daly waters. The Overland Telegraph Line reached Daly Waters in June, 1872.

The first Daly Waters pub was built in 1893. The current Daly Waters pub was built in 1930 by Bill and Henrietta Pierce.

Top right; The Daly Waters pub.

Left; The Daly Waters outback servo.

Mataranka Thermal Pool

Elsey National Park

A Place to Relax

Mataranka's spring fed thermal pool is a short 200 metre walk from here. Its warm, crystal clear water flows year round and provides a relaxing natural swimming pool for countless travellers.

Exploring the Springs

Swimming in the Thermal Pool is the most popular activity, however to explore the surrounding forest further take the short loop track. This walk winds through lush cabbage palm forest to the Waterhouse River and then to Rainbow Spring, the source of the Thermal Pool.

Where Does the Water Come From?

This spring is associated with a massive limestone formation that extends north of Katherine and to the Queensland border. Although outcrops of the rock can be seen along the highway between Mataranka and north of Katherine, most of the limestone is below ground. Wet season rainfall absorbed into the porous limestone is heated by the earth to a warm 54° C before being released as crystal clear spring water.

Rainbow Spring and other springs of the region have long been known by local Aboriginals. The spring was discovered by white settlers in 1891 and 1892 when soldiers stationed at Mataranka discovered the spring, turning it into a healthy swimming pool.

Scientists who have recently investigated the cabbage palm have suggested it as a sub species of the red cabbage palm of Central Australia. This palm only grows in small pockets along Fawn Valley and the Fawn River west of Alice Springs and over 1000 kilometres from here! This wide but isolated distribution from East Australia was once a much warmer and tropical place.



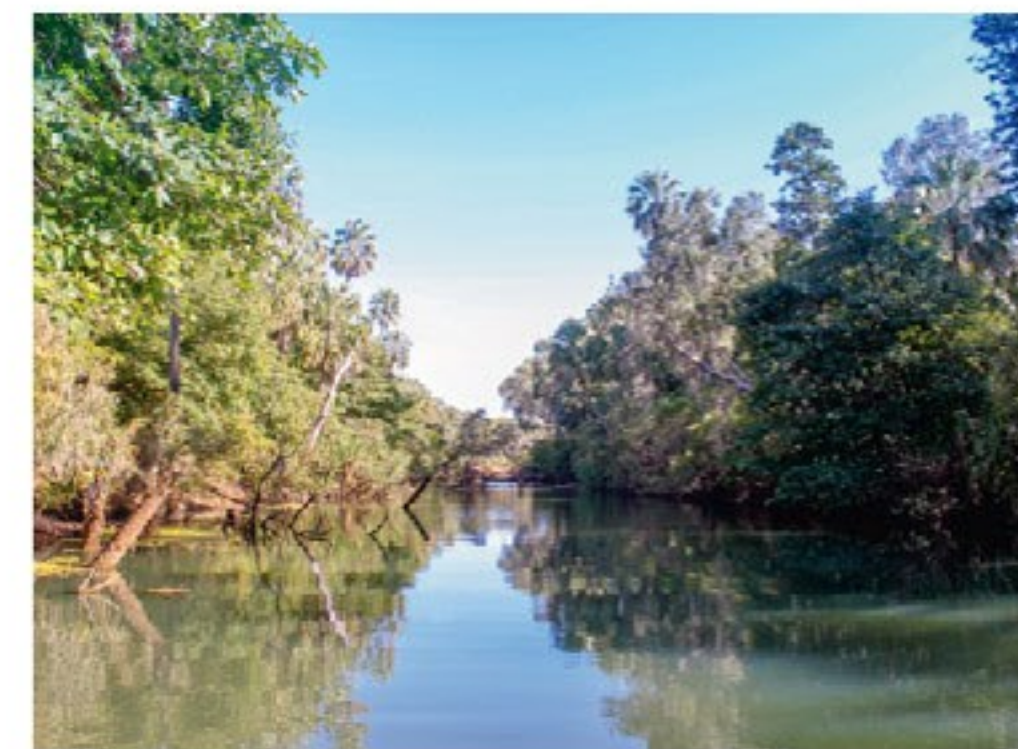
Mataranka

At Mataranka (meaning home of the snake) there is a 500m waterway is fed by an underground spring that gently flows down a watercourse lined with cabbage palms, the spring pumps out 30.5 megalitres of water each day. The water temperature is around 30 degree's centigrade and just lovely to be in.

Top left; Mataranka thermal pool.

Bottom right; The Waterhouse river.

Top Right; The crystal clear water.



Katherine

Katherine is 1181 km north of Alice Springs on the Stuart Highway, the town is on the banks of the Katherine River.

Explorer John McDouall Stuart had tried twice to go from the south to the north failing on both try's. On the third journey across the continent from north to south he was successful, in July, 1862 John Stuart crossed the Katherine River and the start of Katherine town began.

Katherine Telegraph Station was built in 1872 and the completion of the Overland Telegraph Line later in 1872, and the town began with a small permanent population on the west side of the Katherine River.

Katherine has hot springs in which you can swim or just sit in the hot water, today it is quite a big town with lots of services. Just out of town is the Nitmiluk national park (2,947 km²) which is owned now by the Jawoyn people, the park has 13 gorges and Aboriginal rock art..



Nitmiluk



JAWOYN SHARING OUR COUNTRY

Katherine / Nitmiluk Gorge

Located on the lands of the Jawoyn people, rock art sites dot the park and dreaming stories bring the silent gorge walls to life. The beauty and sheer size of the spectacular Nitmiluk Gorge spans over 13 gorges.

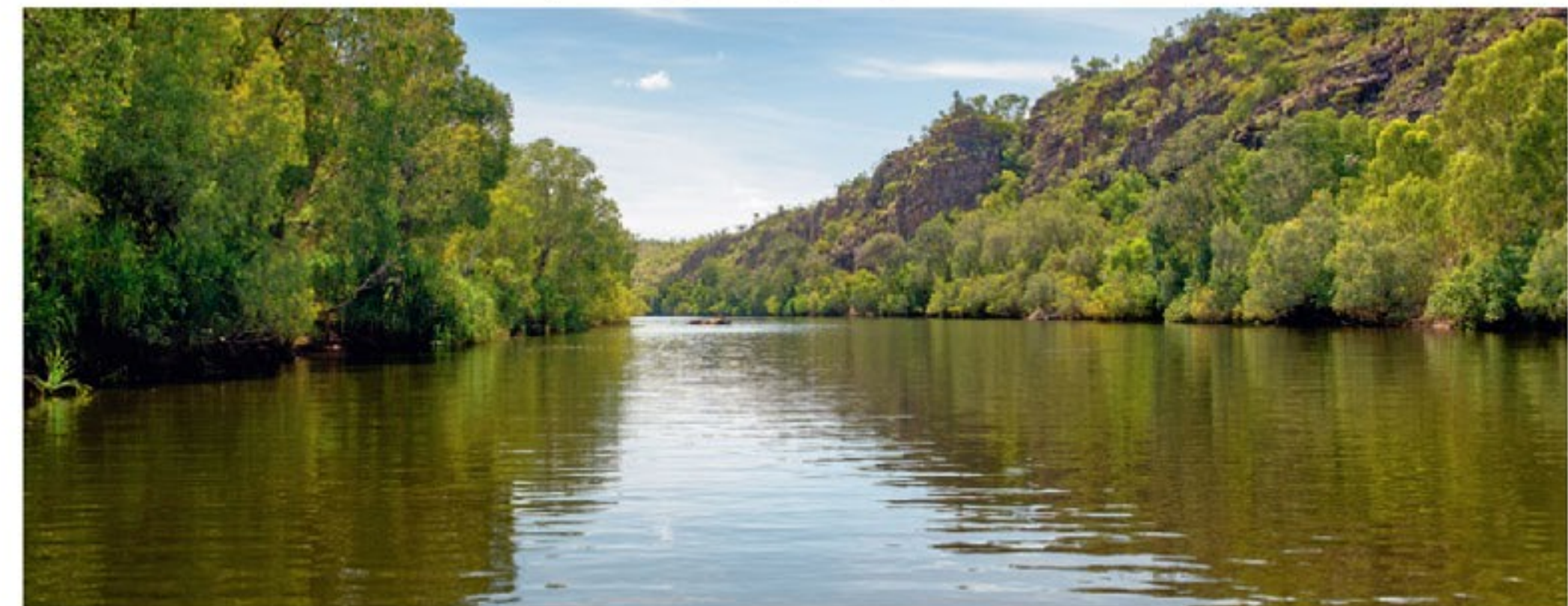
The first two gorges are accessible by boat, if you wish to do the other gorges you have to use a canoe and be prepared for overnight stays at campsites in the gorges.

The gorge is closed in the wet season as the water can rise 17 metres, this allows salt water crocodiles to enter the gorge, so traps are laid and the saltwater crocks caught and removed from the gorge before people are allowed into the gorge.

There are freshwater crocodiles in Katherine gorge and signs warning people where the nesting area's and to keep out.



Katherine river





Katherine Gorge



Rock art at Katherine / Nitmuluk gorge

These paintings are like a book to us.

White fellows have books that tell stories.

Black fellows have paintings that tell stories from our elders.





Crocodile nesting area
Do not enter



Freshwater crocodile



The end of the first Katherine Gorge





The water level can rise up
to 17 metres in Katherine Gorge

The second Katherine Gorge



Edith Falls / Leliyn

Edith Falls is a series of cascading waterfalls and pools on the Edith River in the Nitmiluk National Park, located approximately 60 kilometres north of Katherine, in the Northern Territory of Australia.

From the car park is a short walk to the main pool that had paperbark and pandanus planted around it, with a waterfall at the end of the pool, great for a swim.

The Leliyn circuit walk goes up a hill through different types of tree's, there are birds and lizards that appear on the walk. At the top of the hill it then drops down to cross the upper pool above the falls. Views of the waterfalls and Edith River from two lookouts are a feature of this walk. There is an middle pool and an upper pool, the upper pool was very nice to cool off in.

There is another walk to Sweetwater pool which was about a 9km round trip.

Welcome to Leliyn

Edith Falls

This is Jawoyn country and Jawoyn people welcome you.

Enjoy walking, swimming and relaxing at this special place.

Nature is very much part of Jawoyn culture here. Find out more on the way to the pool.

For your safety

- Observe safety and warning signs
- Do not climb rocks
- Do not jump or dive from rocks
- Canoeing is not permitted
- Carry and drink plenty of water when walking
- Protect yourself from the sun
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear when walking
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day

Please remember

- Take your rubbish away with you
- Keep to designated roads and tracks
- All cultural items and wildlife are protected
- Pets are not permitted in this Park
- Nets, traps and firearms are not permitted
- Avoid using soaps and detergents in or near waterways
- Camp only in designated camping areas - pay your fees at the kiosk
- Generators are not permitted in this Park
- No fishing is permitted
- Check that your vehicle is not transporting pests like weeds and cane toads.

Respecting Culture

Jawoyn People ask that you show respect and do not enter restricted areas in the Park. Please acknowledge all directions and signage.

What to see and do

Leliyn has great swimming, scenic walks, soft grassy camp sites and a shady picnic area. You can purchase food at the kiosk, or cook your own on the free gas barbecues.

During the wet season, from December to April, you may find access is little restricted. The trail and pools are closed when high water levels and strong currents make them dangerous.

Swimming and walking

The large lower pool is an easy 150 metre walk from here. You will have to walk longer for a swim in the upper pools and even further to Sweetwater Pool.

Leliyn Trail

Sweetwater Pool

Legend

Canoeists often hear the eerie wailing of the





Edith Falls / Leliyn

Left; The bottom pool.

top left; A water monitor.

Right; A heron cooling off.







This book covers from Alice Springs to Katherine (1200km's).

The Stuart highway follows the Overland Telegraph Line north to Darwin, it passes some famous places like the Devil Marbles, Katherine Gorge and many more beautiful places if you take the time to explore.

The landscape changes from the parched lands north of Alice springs to the lush tablelands around Katherine.

