



Gammon Ranges National Park

Overview – this Park provides visitors with opportunities to enjoy remote area camping, interesting drives, bushwalking, bird watching, and the chance to explore relics of pastoral and criminal history. The area is generally accessed via Park Headquarters at Balcanoonna, some 100kms east of Copley, although it can also be entered from the Yankaninna Road and Arkaroola. Legendary stockman RM Williams began his enterprise at Italowie Gorge with an Aboriginal mate called Dollar. The Park is some 128,228 Ha in area, and consists mainly of rugged arid ranges, deep gorges, some open plains, all drained by a number of rivers (of rock) – for more information, visit the DEH website - http://www.denr.sa.gov.au/parks/outback.html#the_gammon_area and the Scientific Expedition Group's website - <http://www.communitywebs.org/ScientificExpeditionGroup/pdf/GraspDescription.pdf> .

Aboriginal occupation – the local People (the Wailpi or Adnjamathanha) have a legend that tells of the giant serpent 'Arkaroo' in the peoples 'Dreamtime' who slithered down from the ranges to quench his thirst. As he dragged his body back to the Gammon Ranges, he carved the deep gorge of the Arkaroola Creek. As he rested, his bloated body formed springs and water-holes. See these two websites for more information -

- http://www.ausanthrop.net/resources/ausanthrop_db/detail.php?id_search=511
- <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/archives/HDMS/aa338/tindaletribes/wailpi.htm> .

4WDing and other activities – Much of the Park is not accessible by vehicle, however the north-east quarter has a rectangular ring route (some of which is one way), providing scenic views, particularly to the west. Ideally, set up a standing base camp (or book one of two Park huts), and undertake leisure activities from there, such as bushwalking, photography and bird watching.

Bird life – one of the Park's biggest drawcards is its abundant birdlife - some 160 bird species (<http://www.arkaroola.com.au/activities.php>) have been recorded at Arkaroola, and many of them would presumably inhabit the Gammons as well.

Native fish – an endangered fish, the Flinders Ranges Purple-spotted Gudgeon, lives in some of the Park's waterholes – see <http://www.nativefishsa.asn.au/newsletter/2001april/page5.html> .

Criminal history – the website (<http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/grindell.htm>) describes the murder trial of Gammon's resident, John Grindell in 1918 – his hut still stands today, and is available to book for accommodation through the Park's office.

Access – the National Parks website will provide all necessary information regarding camping fees and charges - <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/parkabout.pl?Vulkathunha-GammonRangesNP> - for more details, contact the Wilpena Park office - Phone: (08) 8648 0049.

Further information – there is much other material available on the Internet about the Gammons. Some useful sites might be –

- <http://www.leylandhouse.com.au/Gallery%20Page1156.htm> (a beautiful photograph)
- <http://www1.tpqi.com.au/users/harryh/reports/wr006.html> , and
- <http://homepages.picknowl.com.au/greenh/pages/default.htm>

YOU can help – become an educated 4WD driver, engage 4WD on the tracks, lower tyre pressures, and drive with the environment and other users in mind.

In the end, it is all up to us, the users, whether tracks in the DCP will remain open.



Warning: most States now have large fines for driving on closed tracks.

The South Australian unsealed Outback road network is one of the State's greatest assets. They can be dusty when dry, or prone to flood damage after rain. The roads are often closed after rain to prevent further damage and to ensure the safety of road users. Severe penalties apply for motorists travelling on closed roads.

Road Conditions Hotline – 1300 361 033.

NB - Just because a track is shown on a map does NOT mean the public can access that track - tracks shown on the RAA Map No 13 "Outback" are open to the public (latest edition is November 2002).

NGARKAT TRACKS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The next Interclub Working Bee will be held 6 and 7 May 2006. Your Club has been sent full details – please support this very worthwhile activity, and help keep some parks tracks open.

WE NEED COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS ON THE NRAU - with computer skills; knowledge of the State, NPs, forests, and pastoral areas; time to attend meetings; knowledge of Government Department ideas; and possibly retired.

IN THE FUTURE YOU WILL NEVER HAVE MORE ACCESS THAN YOU HAVE NOW - more areas will be closed – the user pays principle will increase – it is already in national parks – and is coming in private and leasehold areas.

It always amazes us that people spend between \$20,000 to \$60,000 on a 4WD vehicle, perhaps another \$10,000 on a tent/camper trailer, and more \$s on associated camping equipment. They then want to go and use those assets in a remote area, but object to paying a few dollars to a central organisation that attempts to maintain open access to the areas which they enjoy.

We also continually have problems getting sufficient people to volunteer onto Committees to "fight the fight". The average club member just seems to think that it's not all that important and they should just be involved in having a good time. **This is very short sighted!** - ever thought as to whether your children or grand children are going to be able to have some of the experiences we have had travelling and camping in pristine remote areas.

GET MOTIVATED! GET INVOLVED! - think passionately about your chosen recreation **before its too late**, otherwise you are likely to be jammed into that crowded caravan park along with every body else. That may be slightly over the top, but really it needs thoughts like that to jolt the uninterested majority into either doing something or at least caring that somebody else is trying.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CLUBS - If your club wishes to contribute in any way to this newsletter, please forward details to The Editor, NRAU Newsletter, PO Box 178, ENFIELD PLAZA 5085, or via email to bigdaddy@picknowl.com.au

TRIG (TRIGONOMETRICAL) STATIONS

Many 4WD enthusiasts would be familiar with the term Trig Station and have seen them often marked with a steel beacon or stone cairn in their travels.

These points are the primary or major stations established by surveyors and have precise coordinates and elevations. They were usually established on the most prominent hills as this gave the best visibility to adjoining stations and the surrounding features. One of their major uses has been to provide control for mapping and they have been instrumental in the production of the 1:50000 and 1:250000 scale maps you would use on your trips.

In South Australia the establishment of Trig Stations commenced with the first Surveyor General, Colonel Light, and currently there are approximately 1000 Trig Stations in use throughout the state. The responsibility for their protection and maintenance still lies with the office of the Surveyor General.

As you can imagine the Trigs in the less populated regions of the state are only used occasionally the responsible entity would appreciate a report on any problems you may notice with them in your travels. Likely problems include damaged/collapsed beacons, erosion threatening the stability of the site, access problems and the like.

The person to contact is C. Jordan, Land Boundaries Branch, Dept. for Administrative and Information Services, Phone 82262464

CAMPING ALONG THE COORONG

The Coorong, some 50,000 ha, lies adjacent to the mouth of the River Murray, and consists of a long, shallow, saline lagoon more than 100 km in length, separated from the Southern Ocean by the sand dunes of the Youngusband Peninsular.

The Coorong offers some wonderful camping areas, but permits are required, and can be obtained from

- ◆ Self-registration stations at
 - 28 Mile crossing Parnka Point
 - Wreck Crossing Long Point
 - 32 Mile Crossing Godfreys Landing
 - 42 Mile Crossing Barkers Knoll

- ◆ Permit sales outlets in
 - MENINGIE KINGSTON
 - NPWSA office BP Roadhouse
 - Caltex Roadhouse Mobil Roadhouse
 - Melaleuca Info Centre Shell Roadhouse
 - POLICEMANS POINT Kingston Caravan Park
 - Coorong Caravan Park The Big Lobster
 - Coorong Hotel/Motel HINDMARSH ISLAND
 - SALT CREEK Marina
 - Shell Roadhouse GOOLWA
 - TAILEM BEND South Coast Marine
 - Tourist Info Centre Signal Point Centre

See also <http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/coorong/index.htm>



Four Wheel Drive South Australia
Ngarkat Conservation Park Advisory Committee (NCPAC)
(A Sub-Committee of the NRAU)

NGARKAT NGEWS

Vol 2. No 1

The Border Track

January 2006

A Happy New Year to all readers.

Although not a lot has happened so far as FWDSA and Ngarkat Conservation Park are concerned, because of the time of the year and the Border Track being closed, thought has been going in to our programme for 2006. Initially the primary objectives are:

- To analyse the data from the Stage 1 Survey conducted last year
- From the analysis decide the sections on which to conduct Stage 2 Surveys
- Conduct Stage 2 Surveys on selected sections
- From the data on two Stage 2 Surveys conducted by the Mitsubishi Club last year (Mt Doughboy/Ron's Hill and Hensleys Trig area), assess and decide on a plan on which to work starting with the May working bee. It will probably include the dune adjoining Mt Doughboy, the two being contiguous.

The Ngarkat Track Maintenance Committee has decided to conduct the working bee on the weekend 6 – 7th May with also the 8th for people who are available. Notices have been sent out to clubs.

Amendment: Please note the notices said to “turn north (right)” at the Border Track to get to Doggers Hut Campsite. It should read “turn north (left)”. Also the dates stated should read as above. The notice will be re-issued.

Similarly for the letters to club Presidents.

We are entering an important phase of the programme where the ideas and decisions will be converted into reality “on the ground”. To achieve this, the assistance of clubs is vital. Please get your club to become involved.

The District Ranger at Ngarkat, Joe Stelmann, has been seconded for seven months to DEH Visitor Management Branch, which is based at Keswick. Senior Ranger, Darren Crawford, with whom we have worked in the past, has taken over the DR responsibilities for that period.

Did you know:

During the last ice age, from 18,000 to 15,000 years ago, gale force winds blew almost constantly. With sea levels 130 metres lower than now, even coastal sand marched inland across southern SA.

The mallee form of eucalypt developed during these grotesquely difficult times. Ruled by drought and fire, the trees developed underground root balls – lignotubers’ which stored both water and food. These spiky bundles of cellulose act as a life preserver for the tree. Technically speaking, ‘mallee form’ applies to any eucalypt with a lignotuber and there are more than 100 species throughout Australia.

----- Extract from *The Disputed Country – Australia’s Lost Border*. With kind permission of author, Bob Dunn.

For more information or to register intention to take part in further Border Track surveys, contact:

John Caldecott, Chairman NCPAC. (08)83966817 <johncald@chariot.net.au>

Keeping on the Right Track