Southwest National Park

Part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Southwest National Park is unlike any other in Australia. Over six hundred thousand hectares of inspiring, wild and remote countryside make this the largest national park in the state. This region has wild rivers and jagged mountain ranges, rolling buttongrass plains and silent green rainforest. High rainfall, ice and wind often lash this area, yet even in cloudy weather there are often unexpected views with light suitable for sightseeing and photography.

Highlights

Southwest National Park encompasses some of the finest wilderness country in Australia and offers everything from scenic drives, quick picnics and brief strolls, to fishing and extended wilderness walks.

Because of the enormous area covered by the park and the **two different ways** it can be accessed by road, details of both the northern and southern sections are included.

THE NORTHERN SECTION: Southwest National Park

National Parks fees apply. Park passes are available from the Mt Field Visitor Centre or can be obtained from self registration booths located at Teds Beach and Huon Campground. sites.

Getting there

The northern part of the park is accessed via Maydena - Allow 2.5 - 3 hours from Hobart to reach the northern boundary of the park. From Hobart head north on the A1 to Granton then take the A10 to New Norfolk. From New Norfolk take the B62 then the Gordon River Road B61 past Mt Field National Park to Maydena. Continue about 72 km to Teds Beach Campground then onto Strathgordon. It is a further 12 km to the Gordon Dam. Or at Frodsham Pass about 30 km from Maydena take the C607, a winding gravel road about 47 km (40 minutes), to Scotts Peak and the Huon and Edgar Campgrounds.

Look out for wildlife on the road.

Things to do

Scenic drives - The Gordon River (sealed) and Scotts Peak (unsealed) roads take you through part of Tasmania's World Heritage Area. The routes are lined with native vegetation including rainforest species such as myrtle, sassafras and celery top pine. Lookouts and viewing bays are located along both roads and are indicated by signs. On a fine day the drive along Gordon River Road to Strathgordon is really spectacular. Both roads can be steep and winding and subject to ice and snow. A speed limit of 60km/hr is recommended.

There are numerous **picnic spots** on the Gordon River Road. At the end of the Scotts Peak Road the Huon Campground is a nice spot for a secluded picnic.

Some of the best **fishing** in Tasmania is found within the park. Trout fishing using artificial lures is now permitted in Lakes Gordon and Pedder all year round. These lakes are man made and were formed in the late 1970s. The original Lake Pedder lies flooded beneath. An Inland Fisheries Angling Licence is required for fishing and can be obtained from Service Tasmania shops, and most fishing and tackle stores. In the local area, licences are available from the Bushy Park Roadhouse (ph. 03 6286 1254). Fishing licences can also be obtained online by accessing the Inland Fisheries website.

Both lakes provide good boating and kayaking opportunities. There are several launching areas. Please ensure that your vessel and all equipment are kept clean and well maintained to prevent the spread of waterborne pests and diseases. Please leave your trip details, including return date, with a reliable friend or relative.

Always register at the booths located at the launching areas before you go and check the weather as conditions can change rapidly.

Walks - No matter how long the walk, it is essential to be prepared for all weather including snow, rain, wind and sun.

Creepy Crawly Nature Walk - 20 minutes. Creepy Crawly Nature Walk is a 20 minute one way round trip.

Start of Port Davey Track 2 hours return. Start from the Port Davey Track car park about 300 m before the Huon Campground. Follow the signs to the track, which winds through an interesting mixture of buttongrass moorland, scrub and rainforest. After a leisurely hour walk the track starts to deteriorate so this is a good return point as the path soon becomes rough and muddy.

Eliza Plateau - 5-6 hours return. Standing alongside the towering Mt Anne, the Eliza Plateau offers spectacular views over nearby ranges and lakes, on clear days. Start from Condominium Creek Car Park about 21 km along the Scotts Peak Road. This steep climb up an exposed ridge should only be attempted by those with reasonable fitness.

Lake Judd - 8 hours return. Lake Judd is a deep, ice-carved lake surrounded by precipitous mountains. For experienced bushwalkers start at Red Tape Creek, 29km along the Scotts Peak Road.

Overnight walks - This area contains some fantastic remote overnight and extended walks such as the Port Davey and South Coast Tracks. For all extended walks, such as Western Arthurs and Mt Anne, please contact Mt Field Visitor Centre for advice. Walkers should NOT venture into this wilderness without careful preparation, and suitable equipment.

Facilities

Picnic facilities, toilets, shelters and rubbish recycling centres are located at Teds Beach, and Edgar and Huon Campgounds. Fires are permitted in these locations where fireplaces and firewood are supplied. No fires are permitted at Teds Beach and electric barbecues are provided. Please don't collect wood from the bush. Where no wood is provided use fuel stoves.

In the north of the park, basic camping facilities are provided at Teds Beach and Huon Campgrounds (managed by PWS) and Edgar Campgrounds (managed by Hydro Tasmania). There are no camping fees for the Edgar Campgroud. Mt Field National Park has the most facilities, including showers and powered sites. The campground is managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service and camping fees apply. Contact 03 6288 1149 for any further information.

Water is available at most sites. Be prepared with basic food and grocery items. Boat launching facilities are located at Serpentine Dam, Strathgordon, Teds Beach, McPartlan Pass, Scotts Peak and edgar Dam. Fuel can be obtained from Westerway and Lake Pedder Chalet Lake Pedder Chalet also offer meals. Contact the Chalet on 03 6280 1166 for further information.

THE SOUTHERN SECTION: Southwest National Park

Park Entry fees apply for all areas south of Cockle Creek Bridge and self-registration facilities are available at the Cockle Creek site office. Passes can also be obtained from Hastings Caves Visitor Centre, Geeveston Forest and Heritage Centre and the Parks & Wildlife Shop, 24 Main Road Huonville (Mon - Fri, 9 - 4.30). Passes are available state-wide at Service Tasmania Shops.

Getting there

The southern part of the park is accessed via Cockle Creek, the south-eastern entrance to the park 148 km (2 hours) south of Hobart. Take the Southern Outlet (A6) to the Huon Highway (A6) following signs to Huonville. Pass through Huonville, Geeveston and Dover. About 15 km after Dover, take the C635 direction Hastings Caves. After 4 km take the gravel road (C636) through Lune River to Cockle Creek. Bushwalker transport is available in summer, contact Tassie Link on 1300 300 520 for details.

Remember when driving you are sharing the road with wildlife.

Things to do

An information booth at Cockle Creek will help you make the most of your visit.

Water activities such as swimming, fishing and boating are popular near Cockle Creek, where the tranquil coves and sandy beaches of Recherche Bay, contrast with the rugged often snow-capped peaks of the distant mountains. You will need a Recreational Fishing Licence to obtain rock lobster, abalone or to use a gill net. These are available throughout the state at Service Tasmania Shops and also from the Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment in Hobart.

This area of the park is great for **bird watching** and **picnics**.

Walks - There are a variety of walks in this area ranging from short nature rambles to challenging treks into the Southwest wilderness. Always carry warm and water proof clothing.

Bronze Whale Sculpture - 10 minutes return. This easy walk starts at the very end of the road about 800m past Cockle Creek Bridge. This life size sculpture of a three-month-old southern right whale is a reminder that whales come to sheltered bays like this to calve over winter.

Fishers Point - 2 - 3 hours return. On this fascinating and easy walk discover whalebones, rock pools full of creatures and much more. The track begins at the whale sculpture and continues to Fisher Point Light

and the remains of the old pilot station. Please do not remove any items you may find as they are protected by law.

South Cape Bay - 4 - 5 hours return. This well constructed track takes you across buttongrass plains to spectacular views on the coast. Starting from Cockle Creek Bridge follow the vehicle track along the southern bank of the creek. After 400 m you will reach the walking track. You will need to take food and water on this trip.

Overnight walks - Longer walks also start from the Cockle Creek Bridge. Refer to South Coast Walks Map and Notes for detail. Remember walkers should NOT venture into this wilderness without careful preparation and suitable equipment.

Facilities

In the Recherche Bay Nature Recreation Area dogs and generators are permitted, and campsites with toilets are located at Gilhams Beach, Finns Beach and Catamaran River. No water is provided.

Within the Southwest National Park basic camping facilities including pit toilets are provided at Boltons Green, Cockle Creek. There are no camping fees. Past the bridge park entry fees apply and dogs and generators are **NOT** permitted. There is no rubbish collection. The nearest waste transfer station is at Dover. Fires are not permitted at Boltons Green. Tank water is usually available but should not be relied upon in summer, and must be boiled or treated before drinking.

The closest shops are Hastings Caves Cafe and Southport Tavern, about 20 km north. Food, accommodation, petrol and postal services are available at Dover, 35 km to the north.

What to bring

Carry waterproofs and warm clothing with you at all times of the year, as this area is prone to **sudden weather changes**. In summer bring a hat and sunscreen. If you are hiking be well equipped with compass, map, sturdy boots and adequate food and clothing.

For overnight trips bring a fuel stove, sleeping bag, and tent. Contact the park office at Mt Field or Huonville for advice about track conditions and any special equipment that may be needed. The "*Essential Bushwalking Guide & Trip Planner*" will provide information on the equipment that walkers must take for an overnight walk. Let someone know your plans before setting off and register before you go. This register is only checked when a group is reported overdue.

Remember your fishing licence if you need one.

Weather

The weather in the Southwest National Park can change very suddenly so be prepared for sun, rain, wind and snow at all times of the year. Check the current weather forecast before venturing on any activities within the park. Up to date weather forecasts are available from the Bureau of Meteorology on 1196 or www.bom.gov.au.

Futher information

South Coast Walks map and notes available from Service Tasmania and Parks & Wildlife Office, 24 Main Rd Huonville.

Parks & Wildlife Service Website
www.parks.tas.gov.au.

Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area Essential Bushwalking Guide & Trip Planner.

Parks & Wildlife Service Notesheets: Parks & Places-Cockle Creek.

Walking Notes - South Coast & Port Davey Tracks, Fishers Point Walk.

Boating Notes - Southwest National Park (Port Davey & Bathurst Harbour).

Contact

(Northern Section)
Southwest National Park
Mt Field National Park office
03 6288 1149 (7 days);

(Southern Section)
Parks and Wildlife Service
24 Main Rd, Huonville
Ph: 03 6264 8460
(Monday - Friday 9am - 4.30pm).

Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Tasmania

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