



## Visitors to Selected Parks & Reserves, Tasmania – 2018 to 2022 (Calendar Year)

### Reference Site Numbers

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) manages over 800 reserves within Tasmania, including 19 National Parks. The PWS does not count visitors to every national park or reserve but produces regular estimates at 14 selected sites in Tasmania – called “Reference Sites”.

Reference Site	Calendar Year <sup>1</sup> (Rounded to thousands)					% Change		Notes
	2018 '000	2019 '000	2020 '000	2021 '000	2022 '000	2019 (Pre COVID-19) to 2022 (Three years)	2021 to 2022 (One year)	
Freycinet*	316	323	225	259	280	-13%	+8%	
Cradle Mountain (Dove Lake)*	286	279	152	179	237	-15%	+32%	
Mount Field*	222	202	141	172	193	-5%	+12%	
Tasman Arch (Tasman Peninsula)*	202	204	112	102	123	-40%	+21%	
Lake St Clair (Cynthia Bay)*	94	93	62	77	88	-6%	+14%	
Narawntapu (Western entrance)#	51	55	53	58	59	+8%	+2%	
Gordon River (interstate and overseas visitors to Tas only)^	79	82	42	54	78	-6%	+45%	2, 3
Tamar Island Wetlands#	44	52	39	40	44	-14%	+11%	4
Maria Island*	34	43	30	34	39	-8%	+15%	5, 6
Hastings Caves & Thermal Springs*	45	41	24	32	40	-1%	+28%	7
Mole Creek Karst (caves)*	60	58	26	28	35	-40%	+25%	8, 9
Highfield House (Stanley)*	12	12	10	13	16	+34%	+26%	
Overland Track*	9	9	7	9	11	+24%	+29%	10
Three Capes Track*	12	11	7	10	14	+22%	+40%	11, 12
<b>Total number of visits/entries to all 14 Reference Sites</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>+18%</b>	<b>13</b>

\* Visit # Entry ^ Survey

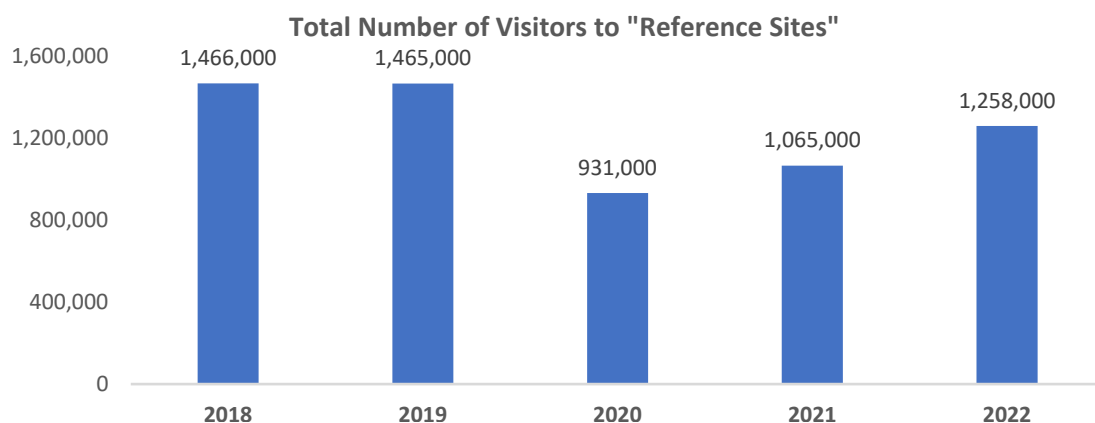
These results are estimations and can be subject to revisions if some data is not available at the time of this report.

#### Notes:

1. **Rounding to thousands.** Visitor numbers are rounded to thousands. The percentage changes are calculated on unrounded numbers.

2. **Gordon River (2022)** – Source of data is Tourism Tasmania’s *Tasmanian Visitor Survey* (TVS). Data for the 12 months ending December 2022 was not yet available when this report was prepared. The estimate of 78,000 visitors is for the 12-months ending September 2022; and the per cent change of +45% is the 12 months ending December 2021 compared to the 12 months ending September 2022. This report will be updated when data for the 12 months ending December 2022 becomes available.
3. **Gordon River (2020)** – The TVS was paused in March 2020 because of COVID-19 and re-commenced later in 2020.
4. **Tamar Island Wetlands** – Closed for approximately six weeks during October and November 2022 due to flooding event.
5. **Maria Island** – data includes arrivals at Darlington (by ferry, cruise ships, commercial operators, or arrivals by air). A much smaller number of private or other vessels land elsewhere on Maria Island but cannot be tracked and are not included in these estimates.
6. **Maria Island** – The Tasman Highway at Paradise Gorge was closed for just under six weeks in May/June/July 2021 to clear unsafe overhanging rocks. This road closure disrupted access between Hobart and Maria Island for visitors.
7. **Hastings Cave and Thermal Springs – COVID-19**. Visitor numbers and group sizes allowed within the caves were reduced in 2020 to 2022 because of social distancing and COVID-19 safety plans.
8. **Mole Creek Karst (Marakoopa and King Solomon caves) – COVID-19**. Visitor numbers and group sizes allowed within the caves were reduced in 2020 to 2022 because of social distancing and COVID-19 safety plans.
9. **Mole Creek Karst (Marakoopa Cave only)** – Closed from mid-October to end December 2022 due to flooding event.
10. **Overland Track – COVID-19**. The number of daily walking departures on the Overland Track were capped at lower levels in 2020 and 2021 because of social distancing and COVID-19 safety plans.
11. **Three Capes Track – COVID-19**. The number of daily walking departures on the Three Capes Track were capped at lower levels in 2020 and 2021 because of social distancing and COVID-19 safety plans.
12. **Three Capes Track** – Break in series starting from January 2021. Walker counts from the commercial tourism operator has been included in the total for Three Capes. Up to December 2020, only data from the PWS walk has been reported.
13. **Total 14 Reference Sites** – Break in series starting 2021, because of the break in series for data for the Three Capes Track (note 12).

Sources - PWS; and Tourism Tasmania (for Gordon River, via the *Tasmanian Visitor Survey*).



### Visitor Trends to Parks and Reserves in 2022

During 2022, there were approximately 1,258,000 visitors to the 14 Reference Sites, being an increase of 18 per cent compared to 2021. Whilst momentum continues to gather pace, visitor numbers for the 2022 calendar year are still 14 per cent below 2019 pre-COVID-19 levels.

Widespread declines in visitor numbers began in 2020 due to the implications from COVID-19. Over the course of 2021 visitor numbers began to increase across many of Tasmania’s parks and reserves as border restrictions periodically eased. Visitation continued to gain momentum up to and after Tasmanian borders fully re-opened in late 2021. Visitation to Tasmania continued to increase, across all of the Reference Sites during 2022.

The Three Capes and Overland Tracks continue to be major visitor drawcards, with visitation levels on both walks having recovered from the previous impacts from COVID-19. Over 14,000 walkers experienced the Three Capes Track and over 11,000 the Overland Track, confirming that Tasmania continues to be a world class walking destination.

- The Three Capes Track numbers increased by 40 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021 and increased 22 per cent compared to the 2019 pre COVID-19 level; and



- Numbers on the Overland Track increased by 29 per cent in 2022 compared to 2021 and increased 24 per cent compared to the 2019 pre COVID-19 level.

In addition, two sites, being Highfield House in Stanley and Narawntapu National Park, have seen visitor numbers recover and surpass pre-COVID-19 levels. These sites have historically had a relatively high proportion of Tasmanian visitors and were therefore less exposed to the absence of interstate and overseas visitors during COVID-19 than many other Reference Sites.

- Highfield House in Stanley increased by another 26 per cent in 2022 to 16,000 which was its highest year on record and was 34 per cent higher than the 2019 pre COVID-19 levels.
- Visitation to Narawntapu National Park reached 59,000 visitors in the 2022 calendar year with visitor numbers eight per cent higher than 2019 pre COVID-19 levels.

While it is encouraging to see that all of the Reference Sites increased their visitation in 2022, the following sites have not as yet returned to pre-COVID-19 levels being:

Reference Site	Comparison to 2019 Visitor Numbers	Comparison to 2021 Visitor Numbers
Freycinet	↓ 13 per cent	↑ 8 per cent
Cradle Mountain	↓ 15 per cent	↑ 32 per cent
Mount Field	↓ 5 per cent	↑ 12 per cent
Lake St Clair	↓ 6 per cent	↑ 14 per cent
Maria Island	↓ 8 per cent	↑ 15 per cent
Tasman Arch	↓ 40 per cent	↑ 21 per cent
Tamar Island Wetlands	↓ 14 per cent	↑ 11 per cent

**Notes:**

1. **Tasman Arch** - A contributing factor to the slower visitation 'recovery' at Tasman Arch may likely be because this site is traditionally highly visited by interstate and in particular international visitors, who combine a trip to this location with a trip to Port Arthur.
2. **Tamar Island Wetlands** - Visitation was affected by closures during October and November 2022 due to a flooding event.

Visitor numbers during 2020 and 2021 at the two show-cave sites were constrained by reduced tour numbers because of COVID-19 social distancing rules. There was demand whilst restrictions were in force but places available on tours were limited. As restrictions eased, more visitors were able to access tours:

- Visitor numbers at Mole Creek Caves, which typically has a high proportion of international and interstate visitation, were up 25 per cent compared to 2021 but remained 40 per cent lower than 2019.
- Visitation was also specifically affected at this site in 2022 by the closure of the Marakoopa Cave since mid-October due to a flooding event.
- Visitation to Hastings Cave and Thermal Springs was up 28 per cent in 2022 and was only one per cent lower than 2019 pre-COVID-19 levels. However, visitation was somewhat lower in 2019 than 2018 because of extensive bushfires in the region that summer.

**Disclaimer**

This information was created by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) for its own purposes based on the latest available data and information as of February 2023. The information was created via surveys or other estimating procedures. These results are estimations and can be subject to revisions if some data is not



available at the time of this report. While care has been taken to ensure the information is as correct and accurate as possible, it should be used for general information and should not be treated as perfect or exact.

### **Further information**

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#### Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service

- Email [visitor.research@parks.tas.gov.au](mailto:visitor.research@parks.tas.gov.au)
- [Parks visitation and tourism | Parks & Wildlife Service Tasmania](#)
- 1300 TASPARKS (1300 827 727) Monday to Friday (9:00am to 4:30pm)

#### Tourism Tasmania

- [Visitor Statistics - Tourism Tasmania Corporate](#)
- [Industry Recovery - Tourism Tasmania Corporate](#)

## Appendix A – 14 Reference Sites – infographic

# TASMANIA PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

## Visitors to Selected Parks and Reserves, Tasmania

### 2022 Calendar Year



The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) manages 19 national parks and over 800 reserves within Tasmania. The PWS does not count visitors to every national park or reserve but produces regular estimates at 14 selected sites in Tasmania – called “Reference Sites”.

The data is for the year ended 31 December 2022 and is compared to prior calendar years. Visitor estimates are based on PWS activity data and visitor estimates from Tourism Tasmania’s Tasmanian Visitor Survey.



TOTAL NUMBER TO ALL 14 REFERENCE SITES	2022 visitor estimates	% change - 2021 to 2022	% change - 2019 (pre COVID-19) to 2022
	1,258,000	UP 18%	DOWN 14%



## Appendix B – Visitors to Selected Parks and Reserves, Tasmania, 2018 to 2022 Calendar Years – data used in infographic

Visitor estimates are based on PWS activity data and visitor estimates from Tourism Tasmania’s Tasmanian Visitor Survey.

	Visitor estimates 2021	Visitor estimates 2022	% change from 2021 to 2022	% change from 2019 (pre COVID-19) to 2022
FREYCINET	259,000	280,000	+8%	-13%
CRADLE MOUNTAIN	179,000	237,000	+32%	-15%
MOUNT FIELD	172,000	193,000	+12%	-5%
TASMAN ARCH	102,000	123,000	+21%	-40%
LAKE ST CLAIR	77,000	88,000	+14%	-6%
NARAWNTAPU	58,000	59,000	+2%	+8%
GORDON RIVER	54,000	78,000	+45%	-6%
TAMAR ISLAND WETLANDS	40,000	44,000	+11%	-14%
MARIA ISLAND	34,000	39,000	+15%	-8%
HASTINGS CAVES AND THERMAL SPRINGS	32,000	40,000	+28%	-1%
MOLE CREEK CAVES	28,000	35,000	+25%	-40%
HIGHFIELD HOUSE	13,000	16,000	+26%	+34%
OVERLAND TRACK	9,000	11,000	+29%	+24%
THREE CAPES TRACK	10,000	14,000	+40%	+22%
<b>TOTAL NUMBER TO ALL 14 REFERENCE SITES</b>	<b>1,067,000</b>	<b>1,258,000</b>	<b>+18%</b>	<b>-14%</b>