



## 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	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019 (Pre COVID-19) to 2022 (Three years)	2021 to 2022 (One year)	
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000			
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	99	+20%	+85%	2
Tamar Island Wetlands#	44	52	39	40	44	-14%	+11%	3
Maria Island*	34	43	30	34	39	-8%	+15%	4, 5
Hastings Caves & Thermal Springs*	45	41	24	32	40	-1%	+28%	6
Mole Creek Karst (caves)*	60	58	26	28	35	-40%	+25%	7, 8
Highfield House (Stanley)*	12	12	10	13	16	+34%	+26%	
Overland Track*	9	9	7	9	11	+24%	+29%	9
Three Capes Track*	12	11	7	10	14	+22%	+40%	10, 11
<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>1,280</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>+20%</b>	<b>12</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.

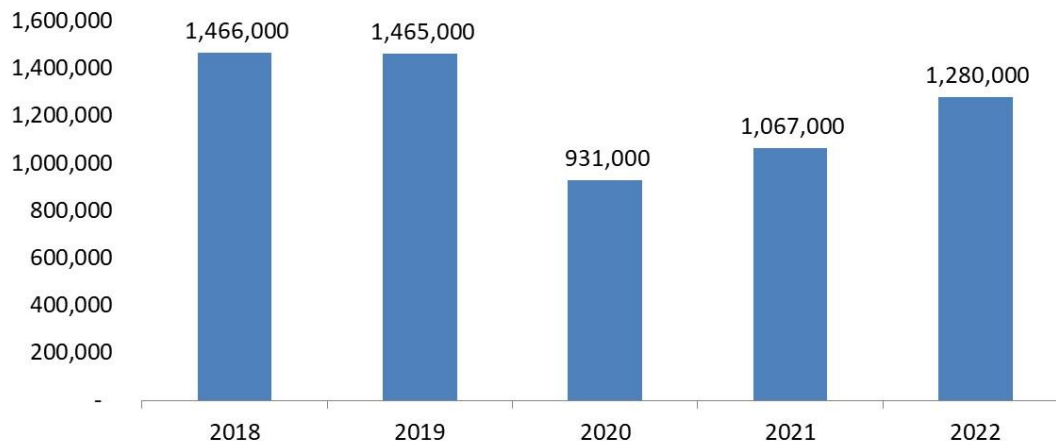
### Notes:

- Rounding to thousands.** Visitor numbers are rounded to thousands. The percentage changes are calculated on unrounded numbers.
- Gordon River (2020)** – Source of data is Tourism Tasmania’s *Tasmanian Visitor Survey* (TVS). The TVS was paused in March because of COVID-19 and re-commenced later in 2020.
- Tamar Island Wetlands** – Closed for approximately six weeks during October and November 2022 due to flooding event.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Mole Creek Karst (Marakoopa Cave only)** – Closed from mid-October to end December 2022 due to flooding event.
- 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.
- 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.
- Three Capes Track** – Break in series starting from January 2021. Walker counts from the commercial tourism operator has been included in the total for the Three Capes Track. Up to December 2020, only data from the PWS walk has been reported.
- Total 14 Reference Sites** – Break in series starting 2021, because of the break in series for data for the Three Capes Track (note 11).



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

### Total Number of Visitors to "Reference Sites"



### Visitor Trends to Parks and Reserves in 2022

In 2022 there was a total of approximately 1,280,000 visitors to all the 14 Reference Sites for which the PWS regularly reports data, up 20 per cent compared to 2021. Whilst they have increased, the 2022 calendar year visitor numbers are still 13 per cent below the 2019 pre COVID-19 impacted levels.

Widespread declines in visitor numbers began in 2020 due to the implications from COVID-19. Visitor numbers started to increase in 2021 in many of Tasmania's parks and reserves as borders and restrictions periodically eased. Tasmanian borders fully re-opened in late 2021 and early 2022, with COVID-19 restrictions eased or removed. During 2022, visitation to Tasmania further increased, with all of the Reference Sites having higher visitation numbers in 2022. Visitor numbers to many of the Reference Sites then increased at a growing momentum as the year progressed, particularly during the second half of 2022.

Walker numbers on both the Three Capes Track and the Overland Track increased to new highs in 2022, a result of the removal of capacity restrictions, increased demand, and substantially higher numbers from May to December compared to 2019 pre COVID-19 levels.

- 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.
- 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 – Highfield House in Stanley and Narawntapu National Park – have increased their visitation to record levels during the pandemic. These sites have historically had a relatively high proportion of Tasmanian visitors and were 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. Visitation to Narawntapu in 2022 was only just slightly lower than the peak of 61,000 visitors in the 2020-21 fiscal year.



Visitation to Reference Sites that typically have a high proportion of interstate and international visitation are still, to varying degrees, below the pre COVID-19 levels of 2019 including:

- Freycinet up by 8 per cent (but remained 13 per cent lower than 2019),
- Cradle Mountain up 32 per cent (but remained 15 per cent lower than 2019),
- Mount Field up 12 per cent (but remained 5 per cent lower than 2019),
- Lake St Clair up 14 per cent (but remained 6 per cent lower than 2019),
- Maria Island up 15 per cent (but remained 8 per cent lower than 2019),
- Tasman Arch up 21 per cent (but remained 40 per cent lower than 2019), and
  - 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.
- Tamar Island Wetlands in Launceston up by 11 per cent (but remained 14 per cent lower than 2019)
  - 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 in 2022 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 year.

The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to monitor visitation to its Reference Sites and the ongoing 'recovery' of visitor numbers to Tasmania's parks and reserves.

### Disclaimer

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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





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

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.

	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	99,000	+85%	+20%
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>1,280,000</b>	<b>+20%</b>	<b>-13%</b>