

# Visitor numbers to selected parks and reserves ("Reference Sites") – Financial Year

## Reference sites

The PWS manages 19 national parks and over 800 reserves within Tasmania. The PWS does not count visitors to every national park or reserve, but takes regular counts at 14 selected sites in Tasmania – called "reference sites".

### Visitors to reference sites (rounded to thousands)<sup>1</sup>

Financial year	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017- 2018	% change	Unit of measure	Notes
					16-17 to 2017-18		
Freycinet	232	272	292	310	+6%	Visit	
Cradle Mountain (Dove Lake)	199	231	252	280	+11%	Visit	2, 3, 4
Tasman Arch (Tasman NP)	141	163	191	203	+6%	Visit	
Mount Field	147	189	194	196	+1%	Visit	5
Lake St Clair (Cynthia Bay)	85	94	90	95	+5%	Visit	
Gordon River (cruises)	92	79	85	81	-5%	Visit	6, 7, 8
Mole Creek Karst (caves)	51	55	46	63	+39%	Visit	9, 10
Narawntapu (western entrance)	44	46	48	49	+1%	Entry	
Hastings Caves and Thermal Pool	39	46	46	46	-1%	Visit	
Tamar Island Wetlands	31	30	35	40	+13%	Entry	
Maria Island	21	23	23	31	+31%	Visit	11
Three Capes Track	n.c.	5	12	12	+3%	Visit	12
Highfield House (Stanley)	11	12	11	12	+9%	Visit	13
Overland Track	8	9	9	9	0%	Visit	

### Notes

Data in this QTB is presented for the financial year, on the basis that it is the most recent information collected.

1. Visitor numbers are **rounded to thousands** to make them easier to read in a table. The percentage changes are calculated on unrounded numbers.
2. **Cradle Mountain 2015-16.** An estimate of 228 000 in 2015-16 at Cradle Mountain was previously published in the 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 2 – Volume 1. That estimate of 228 000 was for the 12 months ending March 2016. The replacement estimate of 231 000 visitors for Cradle Mountain in 2015-16 is for the later period of the 12 months ending June 2016.
3. **Cradle Mountain 2016-17.** An estimate of 238 000 in 2016-17 at Cradle Mountain was previously published in the 2018-19 Budget Paper No. 2 – Volume 1. That estimate of 238 000 was for the 12 months ending March 2017. The replacement estimate of 252 000 visitors for Cradle Mountain in 2016-17 is for the later period of the 12 months ending June 2017.
4. **Cradle Mountain 2017-18:** Data for 2017-18 is provisional (280 000), and may be subject to revision (either up or down). Data for April, May and June 2018 is still being processed, and an estimate has been made for these months until the final figures are prepared.
5. **Mt Field 2015-16.** An estimate of 192 000 visitors in 2015-16 at Mt Field was previously published in the 2018-19 Budget Paper No. 2 – Volume 1. The Parks and Wildlife Service have revised this estimate to 189 000 visitors for the 2015-16 financial year. The re-estimation was necessary due to an inadequate counting device, which has since been replaced.
6. **Gordon River (cruises):** Source of data is the Tasmanian Visitor Survey (Tourism Tasmania). Only includes visitors to Tasmania from interstate and overseas visitors (excludes Tasmanians).
7. **Gordon River (cruises) 2015-16.** An estimate of 83 000 visitors in 2015-16 for cruises on the Gordon River was previously published in the 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 2 – Volume 1. This figure was for the 12 months ending March 2016. The estimate of 79 000 visitors for cruises on the Gordon River in 2015-16 is for the later period of the 12 months ending June 2017.

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8. **Gordon River (cruises) 2015-16.** An estimate of 85 000 visitors for cruises on the Gordon River was previously published in the 2018-19 Budget Paper No. 2 – Volume 1. The correct estimate is 79 000 visitors in 2015-16. The figure of 85 000 was reported in error in the Budget Paper.
9. **Mole Creek Karst (Marakooa and King Solomon show caves):** The Marakooa Cave was closed for approximately six months in 2016 due to flood damage. The cave re-opened in late 2016. Visitor numbers went down whilst the Marakooa Cave was closed, but visitor numbers rebounded to a new record level in 2017 and 2018 after the cave re-opened.
10. **Mole Creek Karst (Marakooa and King Solomon show caves):** The visitor numbers for the Mole Creek Karst caves were trending up strongly at the time when flood damaged closed the Marakooa Cave in 2016. The strong increase since the Marakooa Cave reopened in late 2016 shows that the underlying demand for the tour remained throughout the closure.
11. **Maria Island: break in data series between 2016-17 and 2017-18:** Data up to 2016-17 was based on arrivals to Darlington via the ferry service only. Data from 2017-18 onwards is the combination of arrivals to Darlington on the ferry service, **plus** arrivals by other commercial operators who use their own vessel, **plus** cruise ship visits. The data **also includes** a small number of arrivals by air (estimate only). Non-commercial or private arrivals (by private yacht or boat) are not included.
12. **Three Capes Track:** The Three Capes Track started operations in December 2015
13. **Highfield House (Stanley):** The visitor numbers include only those visitors who paid for a ticket to enter the Highfield House itself. The numbers exclude those visitors who entered the grounds, but who only looked at the gardens and outbuildings.

## Source

- Parks and Wildlife Service, and
- Tourism Tasmania

## Units of measurement

- **Visit** = the act of going to a site; includes the entire time at the site from first entry to final exit. Visitors who enter and re-enter multiple times are only counted once.
- **Entry** = the act of entering a site; may include re-entering a site on multiple occasions during the same trip. Visitors may be counted once or several times.
- A **"visitor"** = the general term used in everyday conversation, and is roughly equivalent to a visit or an entry.

## Further information.

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## Calendar Year commentary

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### *Introduction*

The Parks and Wildlife Service do not count visitors to every national park or reserve. However, the Parks and Wildlife Service take regular counts at selected sites in Tasmania ("**reference sites**"):

1. Freycinet National Park
2. Cradle Mountain (Dove Lake entrance)
3. Mount Field National Park
4. Tasman Arch (Tasman Peninsula)
5. Gordon River (cruises)
6. Lake St Clair (Cynthia Bay entrance)
7. Mole Creek Karst National Park (caves)
8. Narawntapu National Park (western entrance – Bakers Beach)
9. Hastings Caves (and Thermal Springs) State Reserve
10. Tamar Island Wetlands
11. Maria Island National Park
12. Overland Track (full traverse of the whole track between Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair, in either direction)
13. Three Capes Track
14. Highfield House (Stanley)

### *Summary of trends in the reference sites*

In the 2017-18 Financial Year, visitor numbers at many reference sites went up, or remained at or near previous high levels.

Visitor numbers have **increased in different regions** across Tasmania. At some sites, the increase was substantial.

The tourism industry in Tasmania – and visitor numbers to parks and reserves – currently is a growth period.

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## **General visitor trends in Tasmania**

Tourism Tasmania produces reports on visitor trends in their *Tasmanian Visitor Survey*. This survey provides information about visitors to Tasmania.<sup>1</sup>

Information from the *Tasmanian Visitor Survey* is available for the 12 months ending June 2018:

- In the 12 months ending June 2018, there were 1.30 million interstate and international visitors arriving on regular air and sea services to Tasmania (up two per cent from 1.27 million visitors in the 12 months ending June 2017);
- Holiday visitors increased by three per cent (from 625 400 in the 12 months ending June 2017, to 645 400 in the 12 months ending June 2018).

Holiday visitors have increased in each of 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and in the first half of 2018. Holiday visitors are more likely to travel into Tasmania's national parks, when compared to visitors travelling for business, education, events, or to visit friends and relatives in Tasmania. Therefore, the current trend of more holiday visitors will affect visitation to national parks and reserves.

## **Further information and contact details**

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For more information about general tourism data, refer to the Tourism Tasmania corporate website (research page)<sup>2</sup>.

For further information about visitors to parks and reserves, contact the Visitor Research Officer at the Parks and Wildlife Service.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Tasmanian Visitor Survey* does not report about Tasmanians travelling within Tasmania.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/research/visitors>