



Australian Government
Director of National Parks



kakadu[™]
NATIONAL PARK

Tour Operator Information

Conducting Guided Tours to Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin Gorge)

Area Related Information

Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) is located on a south facing part of the main escarpment in the southern part of the park. Koolpin Creek descends from the plateau through the gorge to join the upper reaches of the South Alligator River. Access to the gorge is via the road to Gimbat Day Use area and from there a 4WD (high clearance vehicle) track of approximately 11 km in length. A key is required to open the access gate.

Jarrangbarnmi is a restricted access area under the *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservations Regulations 2000* and a permit or permit is required to enter this area. *Jarrangbarnmi* (Koolpin gorge) was included in Kakadu National Park in 1987. The 1:50 000 topographic map called 'Koolpin' covers this site.

Summary of Features

Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) is characterised by:

- Extremely high biological and aesthetic values;
- Extremely high cultural values;
- A strongly held view by traditional owners that use levels should not be increased;
- Opportunities for 'near-wilderness' experiences in a relatively accessible location;

Landscape and Habitats

Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) descends from the plateau complex and escarpment country in the valley of the upper South Alligator River. The gorge itself is a spectacular landform comprising a combination of:

- Falls and cascades;
- Relatively low but spectacular rocky cliffs and escarpments;
- Deep water pools;
- A rocky stream which flows during the wet season and well into the dry season; and
- Areas of white sandy beach.

The gorge and surrounding country are noted for the beauty of the scenery and the high incidence of rare and/or endemic plant and animal species, which makes the area of considerable biological interest. It supports a rich and diverse fauna including several small mammals, birds and reptiles of conservation significance (e.g. the Kakadu Dunnart, Calaby's Mouse, Hooded Parrots and Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeons). The track leading into the area passes through a stand of the rare and restricted *Eucalyptus koolpinensis*.

Aboriginal Significance

The southern part of the park is traditionally divided among three closely related Jawoyn clans: Bolmo, Wurrkaba and Matjba. This area is within the traditional domain of the Jawoyn language group.

Significant Sites

Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) lies within the general area of Bula (creation ancestor) sickness country (Buladjang country). Bula formed this landscape and then went to live under the ground. Bolung (rainbow serpent) lives in the plunge pools in this country. Both of these powerful creation ancestors can cause earthquakes, storms, floods and disease if disturbed. Jawoyn are very

respectful and careful while in Buladjang country and request that visitors also respect these sites and do not go near them.

Visitors must not go ashore on the creek bank opposite the camping area. This is a sacred site and entry is prohibited under the *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*, specifically under *Regulation 12.23*. Entering a prohibited area under *Regulation 12.23* carries a maximum penalty of \$5,500.

Visitors to the area must keep to the creek line. Some places away from the creek are important cultural sites and can only be visited by Jawoyn who have the authority to go there. Respect for the views of traditional owners in relation to these significant areas means that only low levels of use and high levels of management are appropriate at this site.

Recreation Use

Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) is valued highly by users as a place with important wilderness qualities. Access to the area is available only with a high clearance 4WD, and only through obtaining a permit for tour operators (or permit for independent travellers). This may be issued for day use or for overnight camping, and both tour operators and independent travellers have the opportunity to access the site.

Visitor Facilities

The main visitor facilities provided at Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge) are:

- A car park adjacent to the bottom end of the gorge;
- A camping area designated for tour groups which operators must use;
- A toilet adjacent to the car park;
- Information and interpretive signs;
- Fire rings/fire places – all fires must be contained within these areas.
- Generators are not permitted in the area.
- **No water is available from the Long Pool (Campground Pool).** Please bring water with you to make sure you have enough for your visit;
- Jarrangbarnmi park note – information on Jarrangbarnmi for visitors. Collect park notes from our Bowali Visitor Centre or give the centre a call to arrange alternative collection on 08 8938 1120 or email KakaduNationalPark@environment.gov.au .

Visitor Activities

The main uses of the Koolpin area are:

- Half-day or shorter walks up the gorge as far as the 'black pool';
- Day walks further along the creek;
- As a trailhead for longer distance walks to destinations such as Gunlom, Maguk, Twin Falls and Jim Jim Falls. Camping in the upper part of the gorge is only available to those operators who have a permit to conduct commercial bushwalking tours and are visiting the area under a bushwalking permit. Camping outside of the designated camping area is not allowable under a permit to conduct commercial tours to *Jarrangbarnmi* (Koolpin gorge).

Visitor Safety

An emergency radio is available at the carpark. This is monitored daily by park staff from 6:30 am to 10:30 pm. It can be used in emergency situations to request medical help, a search and rescue operation, or to notify park staff of any other incident where an urgent response is required.

Tour operators must also have a reliable two way communication device with them at all times while visiting the area. That communication device must be carried by the tour guide whenever they are more than 15 minutes walk away from their vehicle. A satellite phone is likely to be the most practical option but guides should be experienced in choosing optimum sites for satellite phone use given the reception restrictions caused by the gorge walls.

Park Management recommends that guides who are visiting this area have Remote Area First Aid qualifications as a minimum standard.

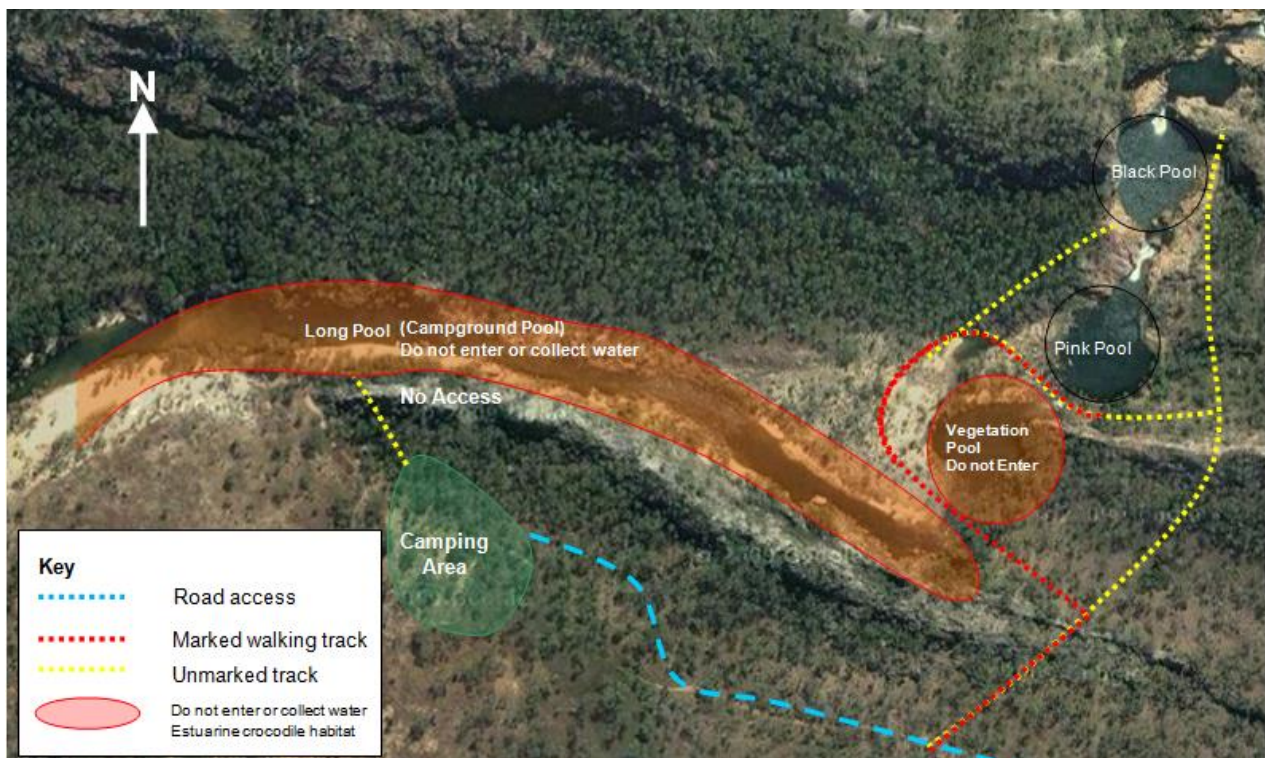
From the Campground Pool, there is no access along the creek line for bushwalking. All walks are to commence from the marked track indicated on the map below.

Crocodile Management

The area is one of our five Crocodile Management Zones in Kakadu, which will not be opened to the public until park staff have completed all the surveys required by the Kakadu Crocodile Management Strategy and confirmed the area is safe to open.

- During the wet season estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles disperse over a wide area, travelling upstream and downstream along flooded creek and river systems and onto adjacent floodplains and associated watercourses.
- Significant growth in crocodile numbers since their protection in the 70's means that they are now found in areas of the park where they haven't been seen since hunting reduced their numbers, including the plunge pools at the base of the Arnhem Land escarpment.
- At the start of each dry season, park staff intensively survey and remove any estuarine crocodiles detected in or near plunge pools that the public visit.
- Surveys commence when the areas dry up to a point where individual pool formations occur and the likelihood of further upstream movement of estuarine crocodiles into these areas is limited.

IMPORTANT: There is increased saltwater (estuarine) crocodile activity, and crocodiles can move into the Koolpin Creek Long Pool (also known as the Campground Pool) or Vegetation Pool at any time after the gorge is opened. For your safety, **do not enter or collect water at the Long Pool and Vegetation Pool** (see map below). A marked track has now been installed for your safety around the Vegetation Pool. **Please remain on this track at all times.**



Access

- Access is by high clearance 4WD only, and is subject to seasonal closures;
- A limit of 6 tonnes Gross Vehicle Mass exists on the track leading into *Jarrangbarnmi* (Koolpin gorge) and trailers are permitted;

- Access is controlled by a gate which remains locked at all times. Specific information regarding key access is listed in the section below.
- Tour operators who have a permit to conduct commercial tours into *Jarrangbarnmi* (Koolpin gorge) must apply to book for each individual visit to the area. Specific information regarding bookings is listed in the section below. See attached booking form. Please note we cannot guarantee access for bookings when this site is closed, however, will keep requests on standby. Once rangers have cleared the area to open we will contact operators to confirm bookings on standby and issue a permit.

Key System

- Keys are issued for the sole use of the company/guide named on each individual permit.
- By completing a 'Credit Card Authorisation' form a key(s) will be issued for the duration of the permitted activity. Please allow a minimum of 14 days.
- Keys must be returned upon the expiration of operator's permit or upon permit suspension or cancellation.
- Operators that fail to return issued key(s) will be charged \$50 for each key.
- Keys are to be used to access the area only during the nominated period on each individual permit.
- Keys may not be sold, hired, lent or otherwise transferred, in good faith or otherwise, to any person whose name does not appear on an individual permit.
- Keys shall not be copied under any circumstances.
- The access gate is to be unlocked and then relocked, both on entering and departing the area.

Commercial Permit Related Information

- a) There is a limit of twelve (12) clients on any tour. Tour guides do not contribute to your client limit.
- b) There is a limit of two (2) tour groups being present in the area at one time.
- c) There is a total limit of 40 persons (tour clients and other independent visitors) in the area at one time.
- d) Tours may only commence between Sunday and Thursday. If a public holiday falls on a Friday or a Monday, tours may not operate on the preceding day. Tour operators may use the area between the hours of 4:00 pm through until 4:00 pm the following day.
- e) There are two categories of permit they are:

Regular Access

Three (3) licences have been allocated for scheduled, regular access tour operations into the area.

- i. There is a limit of 2 days (24 hour periods) per week for each licence holder being either 2 x 1 day tours or 1 x 2 day tours per week.
- ii. Schedules can be agreed upon one year prior to the commencement of each season.
- iii. Allocation of a regular access licence also entitles you to apply for a casual access permit.

Casual Access

There is no limit on the number of licences that may be issued for irregular tours to the area when not being used by Regular Access Licence Holders.

- i. Casual access licence holders may have access on days remaining available after the Scheduled Tour Days for Regular Access Permits have been determined.
- ii. Where demand for available dates exceeds availability, a ballot system may be used to determine the allocation to each casual access licence holder.
- iii. Casual access licence holders may request dates for charter tours up to twelve months in advance providing that names of participants are supplied. Confirmation of bookings will be subject to Regular Access Permit bookings and subject to the permittee continuing to hold a permit on the requested date.

For training tour guides, licenced tour operators may access the area as required, subject to the overall limit on numbers in the area. They will not be subject to restrictions on access days, and may apply for a permit as independent visitors, rather than using their tour group limits. Training visits to the site should be clearly marked on the permit application form to enable the Permits Officer to distinguish between a commercial tour and guide training.

Booking System & Obtaining a Permit

Tour operators who have a licence to conduct commercial tours into *Jarrangbarnmi* (Koolpin gorge) must apply to book and obtain a permit for each individual visit to the area. Please allow a minimum of 7 days for bookings and permits to be processed.

Issued permits must be clearly displayed on the vehicle dashboard at all times and operators must be able to produce it for inspection when requested by a ranger or warden.

Please note we cannot guarantee access for bookings when this site is closed, however, will keep requests on a waitlisting system. Once rangers have cleared the area to open we will contact operators to confirm approval and issue a permit.

Campground and Permit Fee Payment

At the time of application to book and obtain a permit for each individual visit to the area, tour operators have the option of paying for campground fees* at the same time via credit card.

* *Camping fees apply and are the same as the fee set by Determination by the Director of National Parks for the particular campground:*

<i>Fee Type</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Adult (16 and over)</i>	<i>\$6/night</i>
<i>Child (5 – 15)</i>	<i>\$3/night</i>
<i>Family (2 adults and 2 or more children)</i>	<i>\$15/night</i>
<i>Child (4 and under)</i>	<i>Free</i>