

Lesueur National Park



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



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Above Mount Lesueur.

Lesueur National Park

Lesueur National Park was named after Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, a natural history artist aboard the *Naturaliste* on Hamelin's 1801 expedition.

The French government commissioned the sister ships *Naturaliste* and *Geographe* to chart those areas of the coast not documented by Captain James Cook. Many features along the west coast bear the names of members of that expedition, including Mount Peron (the expedition's naturalist) and Mount Michaud (the botanist-gardener). Jurien Bay was named after Charles Marie Vicomte Jurien, a naval administrator at the time.

Lesueur National Park covers 26,987 hectares and is managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Its status as a national park recognises the area's outstanding conservation, landscape and recreational importance. This was identified in the 1950s, when the government botanist Charles Gardner, concerned by the effects of agriculture, recommended the creation of a reserve.

The area surrounding Mount Lesueur was reserved for educational purposes, but proposals for a national park or a nature reserve were stalled because of the area's prospective coal resources. The park was gazetted on 24 January 1992 following public pressure to stop a major coal mining development.

Geology

Lesueur National Park is 24km across and has a wide range of geological formations, landscapes and soil types. These vary from salt lakes and remnant coastal dunes in the north-west through to laterite ridges in the east. This partly explains the huge diversity of flora in the park.

Flora

Lesueur National Park boasts an exceptionally diverse range of flora, with more than 900 species comprising 10 percent of the State's known flora. The park has 10 species of Declared Rare Flora and nine found only in Lesueur, as well as 111 species endemic to the region and 81 species at their northern or southern limits. The park erupts into colour in late winter and spring as acacias, hibbertias, leschenaultias, melaleucas, gastrolobiums and orchids come to flower. The most common orchids to be seen are pink enamel, purple enamel, cowslip, blue lady, white spider and donkey orchids. In spring, several varieties of kangaroo paw are dominant.

The park conserves a variety of vegetation types. The exceptionally diverse low heath, referred to as kwongan by Aboriginal people, covers a large portion of the park. Creek lines and low areas are filled with woodlands of wandoo, marri and banksia. Lesueur National Park is a biodiversity hotspot and ranks as one of the most important reserves for flora conservation in Western Australia.

Below *Verticordia grandis*. Photo – Peter Nicholas/DBCA



Above Wandoo woodlands.

Dieback

Phytophthora dieback is a soil-borne water mould that infects the roots of plants, starving them of nutrients and water. Dieback is a serious threat to the flora of the park. Lesueur is relatively dieback-free. To ensure that it remains this way, and to reduce the risk of introducing this disease, boot-cleaning stations have been provided on walk trails in the park. As the water mould does not persist in lime-rich soils, limestone gabions have been placed in the park drains to reduce the threat of introducing the disease through run-off.

Reptiles

Surveys have identified 52 species of reptiles, including 41 lizard species and 11 snake species, in Lesueur National Park. Research has revealed that the coastal heaths contain the highest reptile diversity of any of the world's mediterranean climate ecosystems. The park is particularly rich in geckoes and legless lizards, and is comparable to the Australian deserts, which are recognised as having the world's most diverse reptile habitats.

Reptiles are generally most active during the day, with the exception of nocturnal geckoes.

Below Western bearded dragon.
Photo – Matt Swan/DBCA



Caring for the park

Plan ahead and prepare Your enjoyment and safety is our concern, but your responsibility.

Be careful Follow the signs in the park and keep to the tracks marked in this brochure. Other tracks in the park are for management access only. If you drive on them, you risk introducing and spreading dieback disease into other areas of the park.

Dispose of waste properly No bins are provided in this remote park. Please take your litter with you.

Leave what you find Picking wildflowers is prohibited – leave them for others to enjoy.

Minimise campfire impacts Don't light wood fires. Portable gas stoves are permitted.

Respect wildlife Do not disturb wildlife – kangaroos often rest under the trees, please keep your distance. Firearms and pets are not permitted in national parks. Please make use of the boot-cleaning stations to limit the spread of dieback.

Be considerate The Yued Aboriginal people welcome visitors who respect the park's cultural and natural heritage.

More information

National park rangers are always pleased to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you require any information or assistance.

Parks and Wildlife Service

Ranger Station Cervantes
Bradley Loop
Cervantes WA 6511
Ph. (08) 9688 6000

Jurien Bay
67 Bashford St
Jurien Bay WA 6516
Ph. (08) 9688 6000

dbca.wa.gov.au

Front cover Cockleshell Gully Picnic Area. Photo – Brad Rushforth/DBCA

Above Carnaby's cockatoo. Photo – Rick Dawson/DBCA

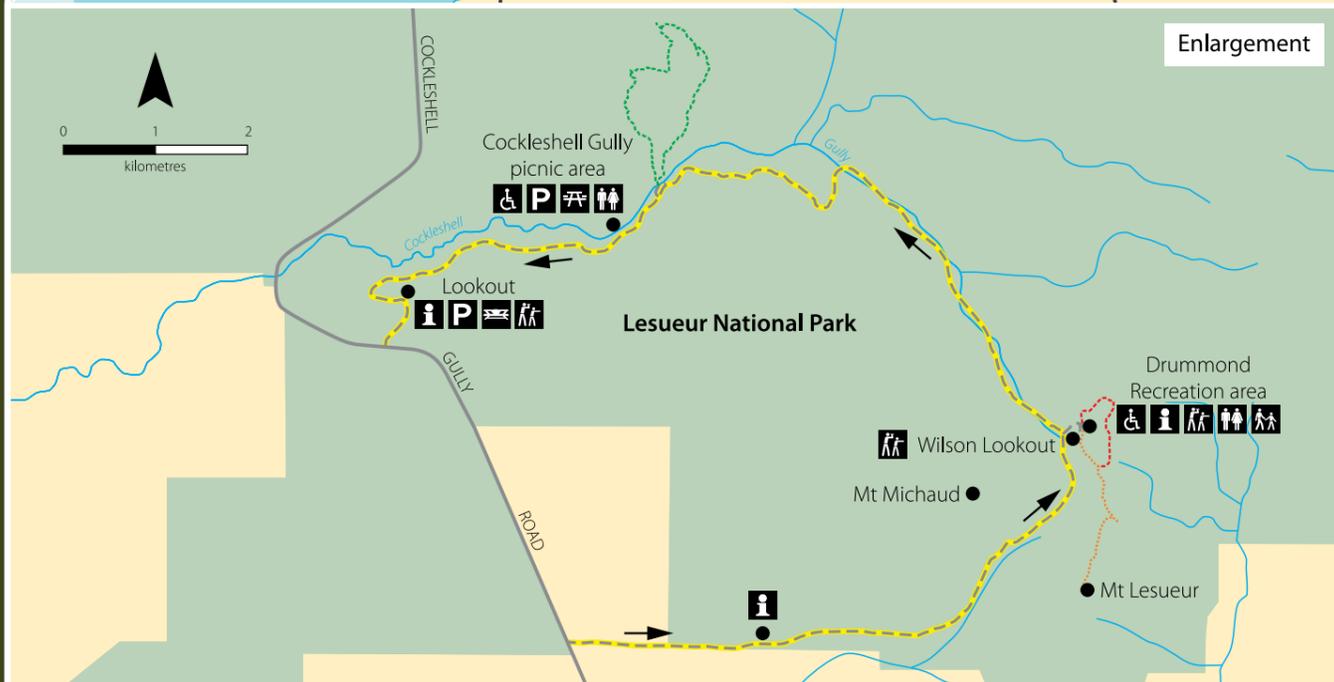
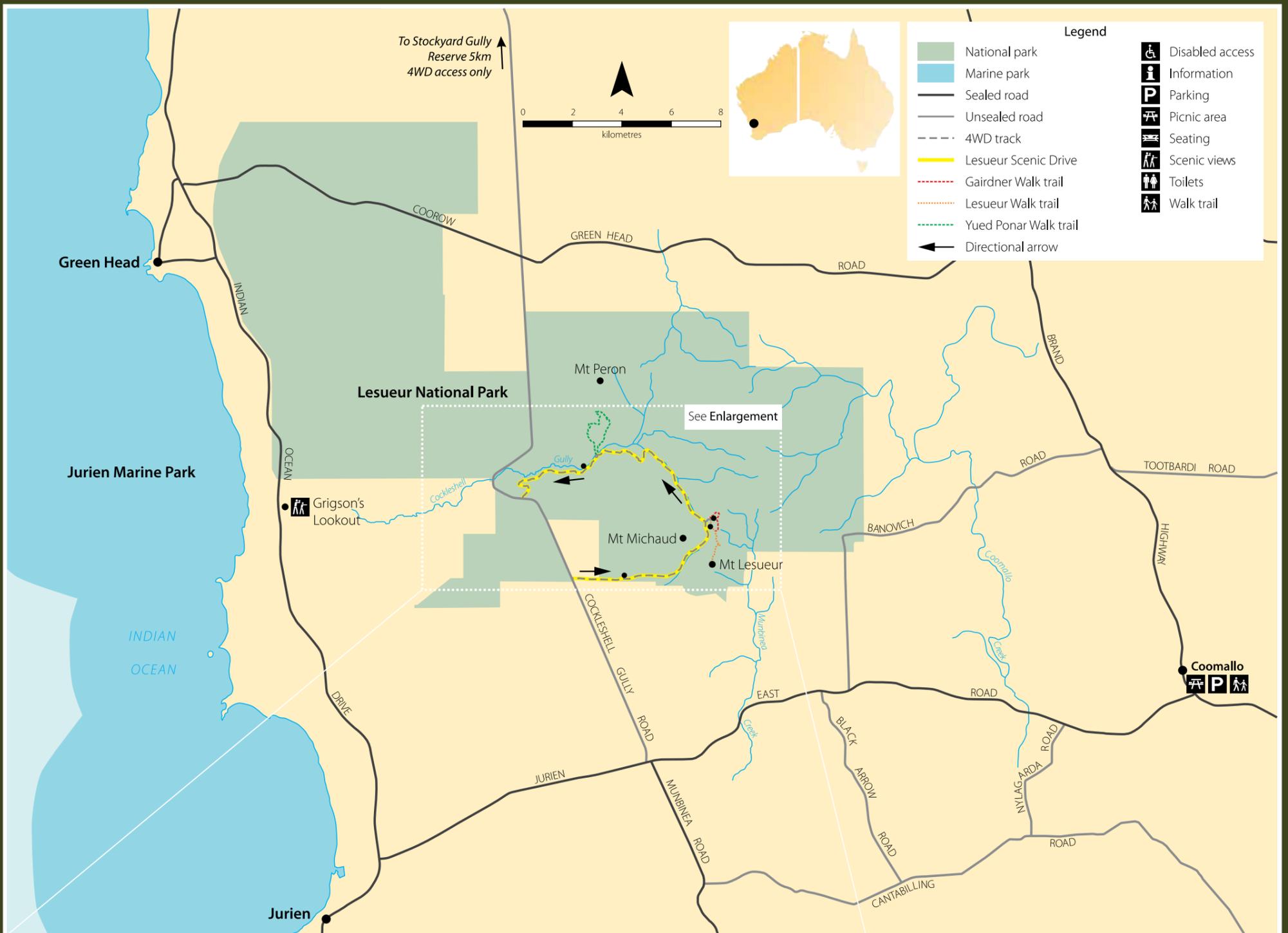
Left Wildflowers. Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/DBCA

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What to do

An 18.5km one-way bitumen road takes you through the park, with regular lay-bys to enjoy the scenery and take photographs. There are day-use recreation areas where you can have a picnic lunch, bushwalk up Mount Lesueur or take the new Yued Ponar Trail that starts and finishes at Cockleshell Gully.

Parks and Wildlife Service walk trails are assigned a 'class' to indicate degree of difficulty. The walk classes range from Class 1, which is suitable for wheelchairs, to Class 5, which require walkers to be fit, experienced and suitably equipped. Check trailhead signs at the start of walks for specific information. The walk trails in this park range from Class 1 to Class 3.

-  **Gairdner Walk Trail** -----
Class 3 2.5km loop
-  **Lesueur Walk Trail**
Class 3 4km return (Class 1 first 250m)
-  **Yued Ponar Walk Trail** -----
Class 3 7.1km loop

When walking in the park, keep watch for wedge-tailed eagles, one of Australia's largest birds of prey. The first 250m of the trail to Mount Lesueur is wheelchair-friendly and offers a glimpse of the ocean and spectacular views of Lesueur National Park.

Stay safe

- Carry appropriate quantities of food and water – 3-4 litres of water per person per day is recommended. There is no drinking water provided in the park.
- Avoid spreading dieback by remaining on marked tracks and using boot-cleaning stations provided at the start of all walk trails.
- Contact the Parks and Wildlife Service Jurien Bay office if you are planning an overnight walk in the park.

Birds

The Lesueur area supports a wide variety of birdlife, with 122 species of native birds and two introduced species recorded. This diversity of bird species has been attributed to the wide variety of habitats in a large, undisturbed bushland area. Birds of the sandplain are particularly well represented by honeyeaters, thornbills, fairy-wrens, southern emu-wrens, white-breasted wrens and fieldwrens.

The woodlands of Lesueur have been identified as one of the few remaining breeding habitats in the district for Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*). The close proximity of breeding and feeding areas make Lesueur a particularly important area for this species, as its population and range are diminishing.

Lesueur is also the northern limit of the known range of many species including western rosella, the little wattlebird and the shy hylacola. The salt lakes and freshwater springs are important summer refuges for several species of water birds, including waders that migrate from the northern hemisphere.

Left to right Jewel beetle, Honey possum. Photo – Babs and Bert Wells/DBCA
Splendid fairy-wren. Photo – John Anderson/DBCA

Mammals

Fifteen species of native mammals inhabit Lesueur National Park, making it one of the State's richest habitats for native mammals. Four species of dunnart (*Sminthopsis spp.*) and four species of bat occur in the park. The honey possum is thought to be more abundant here than in any other conservation reserve north of Perth and is an important pollinator for many plants.

Insects

The park is home to 29 species of jewel beetle, all of which are protected. These insects can be distinguished by their bright metallic colouring, usually yellow, blue, red or orange, and are between three and 65mm long.

