australian wildlife conservancy

Quenda Circuit

Avon Rd Entrance

(6.5km, 2-6 hours, Moderate rating)

Notes for Walkers

- Please carry sufficient water. 2-3 litres per person is recommended.
- No open fires permitted in the sanctuary .
- Please walk on the trail you have booked.
- Please take all rubbish with you including food scraps, there are no bins available.
- Composting toilets are available near the Avon Rd entrance.
- Picnic tables are provided along the trail for your enjoyment.
- Please stay on the trail at all times as many of the areas are very fragile.

Contact Information

Emergency Services:	000
Booking Office:	9572 3169
Managers Residence:	9572 9078

The nearest help is the Managers residence 200m NE of the Ewing Rd Car Park.
Please note that mobile phones only work from the highest points of Paruna and then only intermittently.

Welcome to Paruna Sanctuary

Paruna Sanctuary is owned by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC), a private conservation organisation that protects Australia's threatened wildlife. Paruna forms a vital corridor between Walyunga and Avon Valley National Parks. It has become a safe haven for many of our rare and threatened mammals such as Quenda, Woylie, Tammar Wallaby and Black-footed Rock-wallaby which were re-introduced during 2000-01. A 17km vermin-proof fence extends along the southern boundary to help control feral animals such as foxes, cats and rabbits.

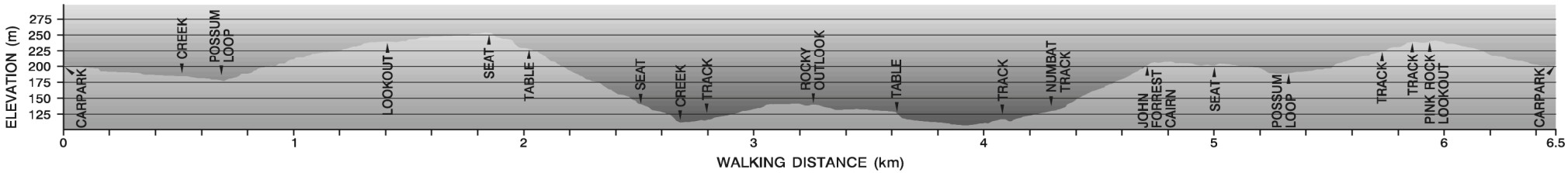
Please recycle your trail notes by returning them to the box at the entrance. Thankyou.

Trail Information

The Quenda Circuit is a one way circuit taking in the best of Paruna. A very rewarding walk with creeks, views, birds, historic monuments and spectacular spring wildlflowers. Distances (in km) are marked in the trail notes. Green markers depicting a Quenda (Southern Brown Bandicoot) are located at turns and junctions.

TRAIL PROFILE

Vertical Exaggeration 3:1 (Trail appears 3 times steeper than it really is)



Quenda Circuit—Trail Notes

Enter at the Avon Road gate and follow the short path to the start of the trail, located to the right of the vehicle track. Toilets are located straight down the vehicle track to the left.

The pretty white trees surrounding the car park and trail are Powderbark (*Eucalyptus accedens*) & Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*). The two species can be difficult to separate but Powderbark has a fine powder on the bark which turns salmon pink when freshly shed.

(0.1) The vegetation quickly opens out along a sandy trail. Picnic tables are located along the dam to the right. Straight ahead, the trail reaches a boardwalk along a granite outcrop. Look for diggings along the path, they might be from the re-introduced Woylie or the Quenda foraging for food. Devils Pins (*Hovea pungens*) a spectacular purple pea is common in this open area in late winter.

One of the sundews (*Drosera erythrohiza*) appear in the sandy soil after rain. These carnivorous plants have red or green rosette leaves. They are covered by a sticky coating that traps small insects which are digested by the plant to gain important nutrients.

(0.3) The trail meanders along a creek, an excellent spot to listen for frogs which emerge during the wetter months when the creek is flowing. Glauert's Froglet which sounds like a pea rattling in a can and occasional calls from the Quacking Frog can be heard during the day in the wetter months.

Return to the trees with excellent wildflowers in the understory especially the widespread yellow featherflower *Verticordia acerosa*. Look for the Couch Honeypot (*Dryandra nivea*) as well as small pink, white and yellow everlastings. This is an excellent area to see birds as they feed on nectar as well as insects attracted to the flowers. Look out for the Splendid Fairy-wren with its brilliant blue plumage or listen for the Western Warbler that has a melodious, persistent and somewhat mournful call.

(0.69) At the trail junction, the Quenda trail turns to the right and heads up a Wandoo slope. During late Winter & Spring, the smell of the tiny white flowers of *Trymalium* can be rather strong as it grows thickly in this section.

In spring and early summer walkers can enjoy a large diversity of insects. Some have magnificent colouration such as a green and gold dragonflies and brilliantly camouflaged grasshoppers including one that is easily mistaken for a leaf. Look for the irridescent Christmas Spider, a small spider often flecked with green, yellow or orange. Orb Weaver spiders with magnificent webs are also often seen.

(1.21) Moving along the trail, walkers come into an excellent stand of Wandoo and Powderbark. The understory of the Wandoo is fairly sparse as the leaves contain a growth inhibitor effectively sterilising the soil reducing competition with other plants.

There is a good stand of a rare grass tree *Xanthorrhoea acanthostachya,* distinguished by the distinct separation of the brown skirt from the green crown.

The Wandoo woodland is a good area to hear the Rufous Tree-creeper, a bird that has just about disappeared from the Perth region. This reddish-brown coloured bird may be sighted clinging to the side of a tree and has a distinctive piercing call.

(1.41) A spur trail to the left leads to a lookout to an expansive view unfolding to the west. The orange/brown clumps of Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*), a semi-parasite can be seen growing from branches of many trees from the lookout. The seeds are spread from tree to tree by the Mistletoebird.

There are a large number of orchids found at Paruna, a spectacular group of plants with some unusual names and pollination habits. Look for the Donkey Orchid, Pink Fairy, White Spider and Snail Orchids to name a few.

(1.61) There is a massive Powderbark with a series of unusual growths on the trunk called burls. Insect or fungal attack causes these formations which are highly prized for wood work and have sometimes been stolen from live trees.

(1.85) The trail forks with a seat on the lateritic ridge. On this ridge, Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) and Marri (*Eucalyptus* (*Corymbia) calophylla*) dominate the canopy giving way to Wandoo on the slopes.

(2.02) The main trail descends down to a picnic table with a spectacular view of the Avon Valley including the Avon River and the main East-West Railway line. There is a small but dense patch of Tea Tree (*Leptospermum erubescens*) with small white flowers along the path, just past the table.

The trail becomes a series of switchbacks down the steep hill. The vegetation changes completely with trees becoming sparse and stunted. One-sided Bottle Brush (*Calothamnus quadrifidus*) is very dense in places along with the Lemon–scented Bell (*Darwinia citradora*). Dense thickets of the prickly Parrot Bush (*Dryandra sessilis*) are also evident. These plants attract a variety of birds particularly honeyeaters when in flower.

(2.68) The main Paruna creek flows into the Paruna Gorge seen from a large viewing platform. A small trail leads down to the gorge where a large pool forms in the wetter months. Please be careful and stay on the trail and viewing platform as the surrounding areas are slippery and fragile.

(2.80) Ascending through a stand of Wandoo in early Spring, the bright yellow wattle, Prickly Moses (*Acacia pulchella*) is in full flower. This is one of a number of wattles at Paruna.

The rocks along this section are very red with green streaks as the trail crosses a dolerite dyke. Dolerite is volcanic rock like granite formed when larva cools.

(3.04) A short boardwalk leads to a lookout over the Avon River. This fragile area has a very shallow layer of soil on granite.

(3.37) Observe the shiny leaves of Jam Wattle (*Acacia acuminata*), an acacia usually found in the wheatbelt, commonly used for making fence posts. This is the most western population of the species. The mauve Honeymyrtle (*Melaleuca radula*) is also common along this section.

The vegetation opens out in this area as it grazed and frequently burnt for 30-40 years. It is a good area to see a number of small birds flitting around. The Grey Fantail, a small very inquisitive bird often seen displaying its fan-like tail as it looks for insects.

(4.00) The trail comes around a sharp rocky point with a stream below the steep slope and a massive exposed granite slab on the valley across to the south. Once again there are large areas of dead Parrot Bush. Wedge-tailed Eagles may be seen high in the sky as they ride the thermals.

(4.08) The trail goes alongside a steep vehicle track crossing a creek and through some dense vegetation. The nocturnal Quenda is often found in these areas.

(4.29) A picnic table is provided before the climb up a series of steep switchbacks. Seats are provided along the climb including a green stone seat which is a dolerite boulder.

(4.71) The trail reaches a junction with a spur trail climbing a further 100m to the John Forrest Cairn. This cairn, still in excellent condition, was built in 1879 during the original survey trip through the valley. There is a series of these cairns from Walyunga through Paruna & the Avon Valley National Park towards Toodyay.

After enjoying the views, follow the trail back down to the junction and continue straight ahead along the ridge enjoying some spectacular Avon Valley views.

There are a number of parrots seen frequently at Paruna including the threatened Carnaby's Cockatoo a large black noisy bird often seen in flocks. The green Twenty-eight or Port Lincoln Ringneck are always around, feeding in the trees. The name Twenty-eight is misleading as they have a wide variety of calls, very few actually saying "twenty-eight"!

(4.99) Pass beneath a large Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*) to a stone seat looking over the valley. The tree is spectacular in December with brilliant orange flowers. It is a semi-parasitic plant relying on surrounding trees or shrubs for water and nutrients.

(5.20) Make your way out of the Parrot Bush thicket and continue down some stone steps. Observe the soil and vegetation along this section of the trail as it changes from a red pebbly soil to white sand over a short distance.

(5.33) The trail joins up with the Possum Loop just past a sandy stream. Reach a stand of Zamia (*Macrozamia reidlei*), an ancient gondwanan relict which have separate male and female plants. The bright red seeds on the female plant are highly toxic. The Aborigines have a special preparation technique making the seeds an important food source.

A controlled burn was conducted in this area in Spring 2004 with the invaluable assistance from local bush fire brigades.

(5.57) The trail becomes increasingly steep and gravelly as it enters another stand of Powderbark and Wandoo. Powderbark favours the ridges and Wandoo th slopes.

In the small hollows of the Wandoo nests a bird called the Striated Pardalote, which is often heard though rarely seen with its "peep peep" call repeated constantly.

The trail leads onto a vehicle track for a short distance.

(5.73) The trail turns off the track and the vegetation opens out again onto a massive granite outcrop called "Pink Rock" . In late Spring, a pink feather flower (*Verticordia plumosa*) covers the area.

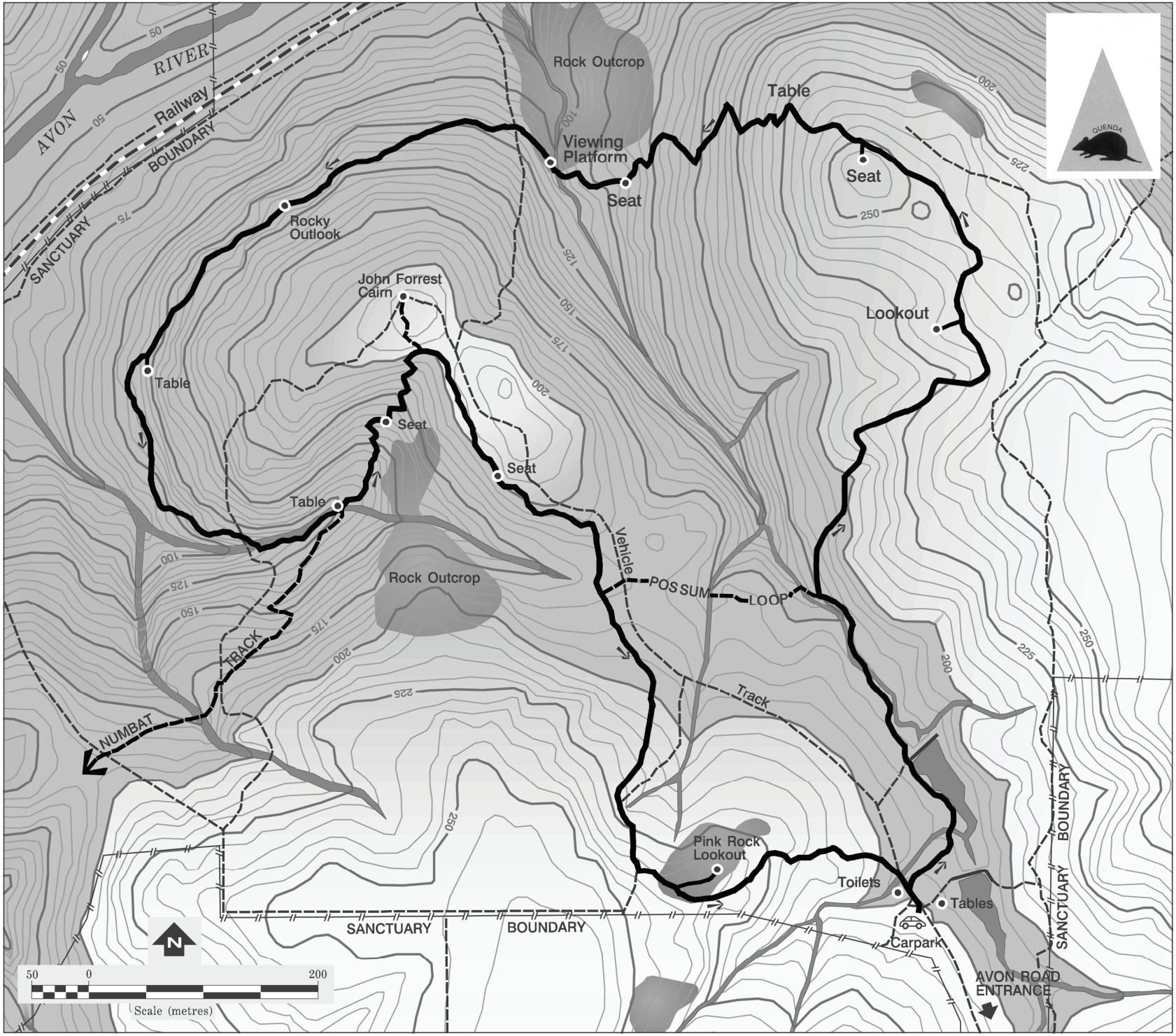
(5.94) Keeping strictly to the boardwalk in this fragile area, make your way to the viewing platform for a well earned rest and a spectacular view. The Avon River can be seen in the centre, and the Brockman River valley to the north. This is a good place to see Tree Martins as they swoop low over the rocks feeding on small flying insects.

The granite in places has cracked to form sheets, a natural process of weathering caused by the heating and cooling of the rock. Many reptiles such as the Ornate Dragon and the Barking Gecko live under these sheets.

The trail goes down towards the vermin-proof fence to another stand of Powderbark and Wandoo where another spectacular wildflower display occurs during spring. Look for the Yellow Buttercups, (*Hibbertia* sp.), there are several species throughout Paruna. Along this section there is also the Bearded Heath (*Leucopogon polymorphus*) which has tiny white furry flowers. The beautiful White Myrtle (*Hypocalymma angustifolium*) is also common in this section in early spring.

Late in spring the Rainbow Bee-eater migrates to the south and is often seen at Paruna through Spring and Summer. Walkers may be lucky to see them emerge from their nests in tunnels on the slopes.

(6.49) The trail soon reaches the end near the Avon Road gate.

The AWC would like to thank-you for visiting one of our special sanctuaries. Paruna was chosen as a safe haven for wildlife because of its location between two national parks and the incredible diversity of habitats within the boundaries. We hope you enjoyed some of the natural beauties of Paruna. If you would like further information on the AWC including helping our threatened species, please take a newsletter or contact our booking office on 9572 3169.

PARUNA
sanctuary