

Flinders Ranges and Outback

National parks visitation snapshot

The region

The Flinders Ranges and Outback region is a spectacular part of South Australia.

About three hours north of Adelaide, and stretching all the way to the Northern Territory border, this region is home to some of the state's most wondrous landmarks.

From the natural amphitheatre of Wilpena Pound to the hot springs of Dalhousie and the expanse of Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda, the treasures of this region really do stretch as far as the eye can see.

Tourism

In 2018, the Flinders Ranges and Outback region contributed \$462 million to the SA tourism expenditure of \$6.8 billion.

The region attracts approximately 729,000 overnight visitors per year (data from 2016-18). Almost two-thirds of visitors are from SA – approximately half from metropolitan Adelaide and half from regional SA.

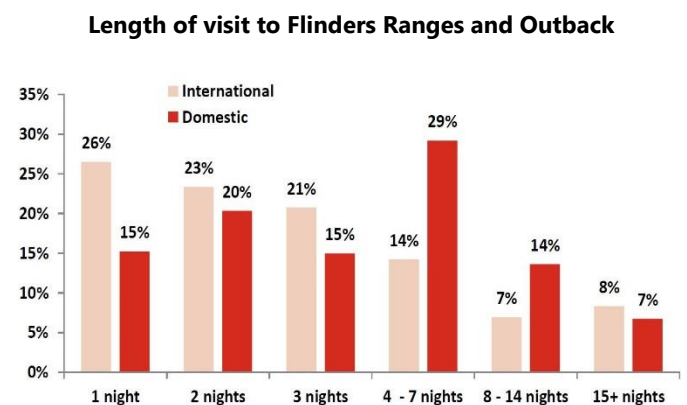
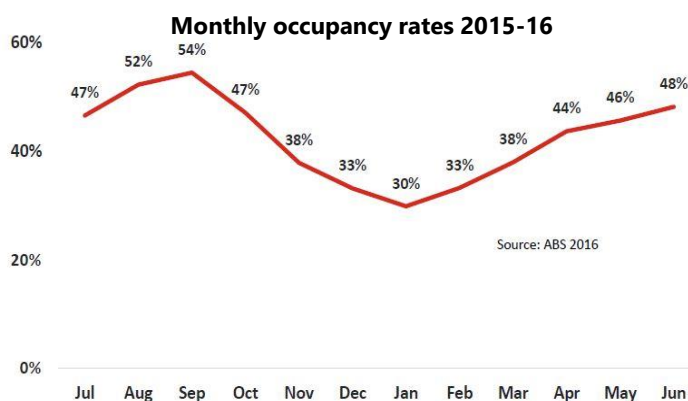
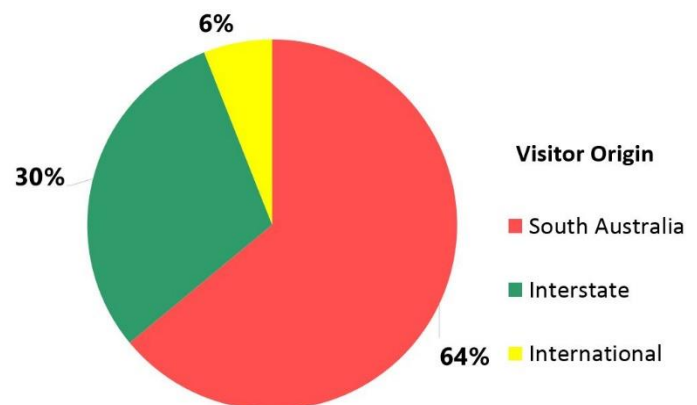
The region has more than 33 visitor accommodation* options, totalling 1268 available rooms. Over the course of a year, occupancy rates average at about 42 per cent – peaking at 53 per cent in August and September and dropping to 30 per cent in January.

For more in-depth analysis, view the [SA Tourism Commission regional profiles](#).

Hotels, motels and service apartments with 15+ rooms

The opportunity

The Flinders Ranges and Outback's regional strategy is to increase overnight visitation via greater regional and cross-regional collaboration on touring routes and events, supported by new products and infrastructure.



National parks

The Flinders Ranges and Outback region is where you find SA's iconic desert parks.

Famed for showcasing unique scenic and cultural environments on an immense scale, collectively, they form one of the largest desert reserve systems in the world.

Visitors to this remarkable region can experience an array of contrasting landscapes – from red sand dunes, gibber plains and salt lakes, to wetlands, artesian springs and river systems.

For people who live within the region, 78 per cent of those surveyed had visited at least one local park in the 2018-19 financial year.

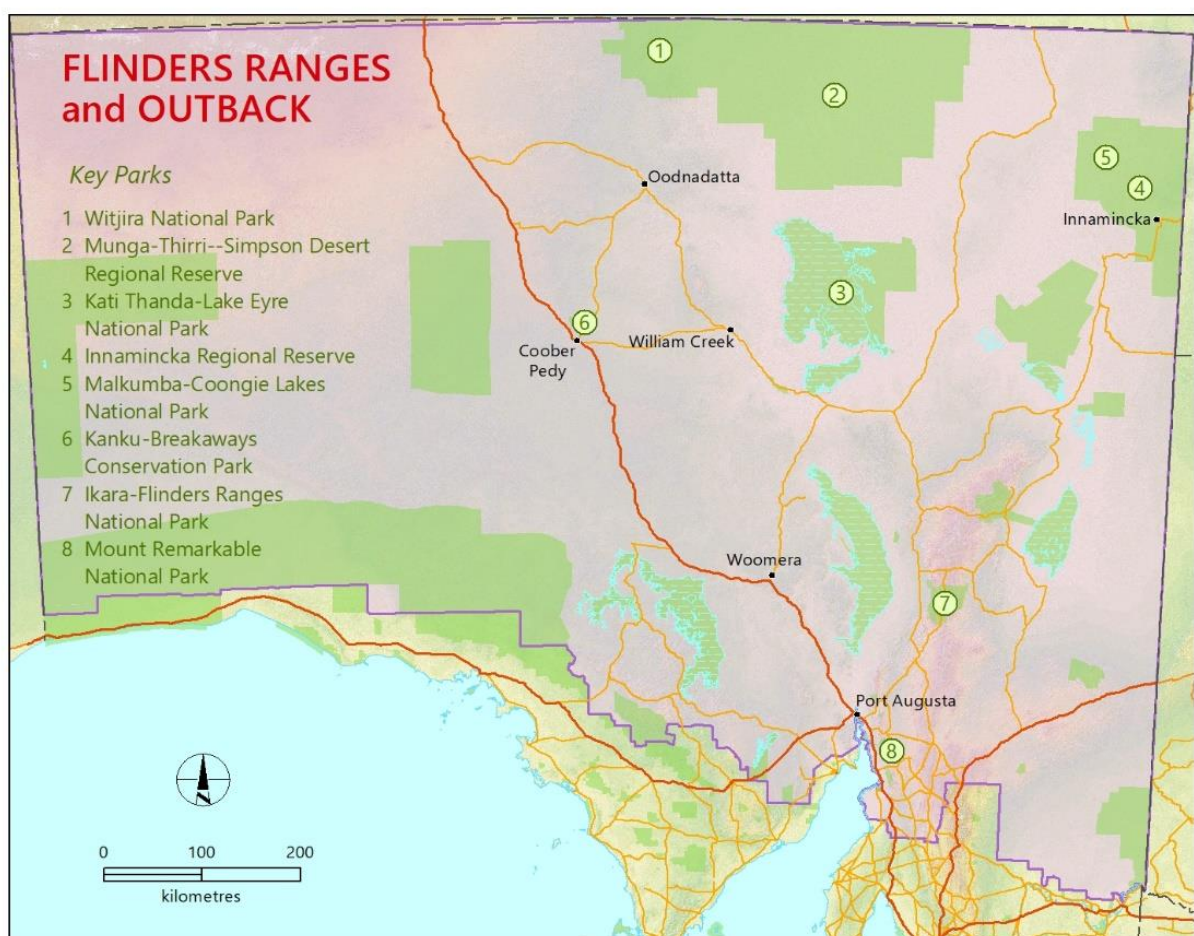
But it's not just locals who know their value – on average, 2 per cent of South Australians surveyed said they visit a park in this incredible region every year.

While [Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park](#) is the most popular, [Mount Remarkable National Park](#), [Witjira National Park](#) and [Munga-Thirri- Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Recreational Reserve](#) are all truly special.

Then there's [Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park](#), [Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park](#), [Innamincka Regional Reserve](#) and [Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park](#), all bringing their unique flavour to SA's desert park offering.

And best of all, many of these parks (excluding Mt Remarkable National Park) are able to be accessed with a single [Desert Parks entry pass](#).

Read on to learn more about some of the national parks in this region that have nature-based tourism interest and potential, or visit the [National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia website](#) to learn more.



Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park

About the park

Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park is one of SA's most iconic destinations, with a sense of space that's unique to the semi-arid zone.

The park is known for its ancient and rugged mountain landscapes, peaceful tree-lined gorges, seasonal wealth of wildlife and rich cultural heritage.

Visitors are drawn to the park for its camping, bushwalking, four-wheel driving, mountain biking, birdwatching and photography.

Visitation data

Online booking information shows that approximately 31,000 people visited the park in the 2018-19 financial year – 34 per cent of them from SA.

The remainder included 20 per cent from Victoria, 16 per cent from New South Wales, 7 per cent from Queensland, 4 per cent from Western Australia and 12 per cent from overseas*.

Of those that visited the park 17 per cent booked to stay overnight in a national parks-operated campground (i.e. not including stays in the privately owned Wilpena Pound or locations outside the boundaries of the park). The average length of stay per booking was two nights and the average number of people per booking was 2.3.

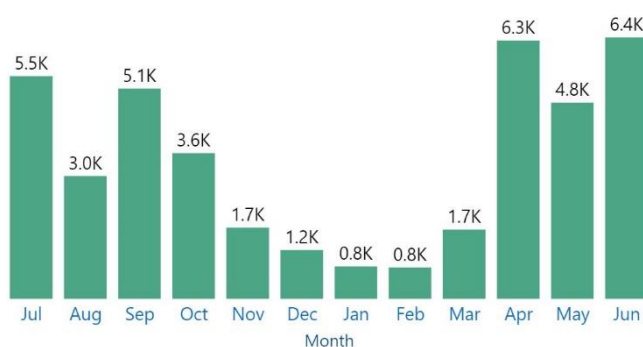
*Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified

Peak and off-peak season

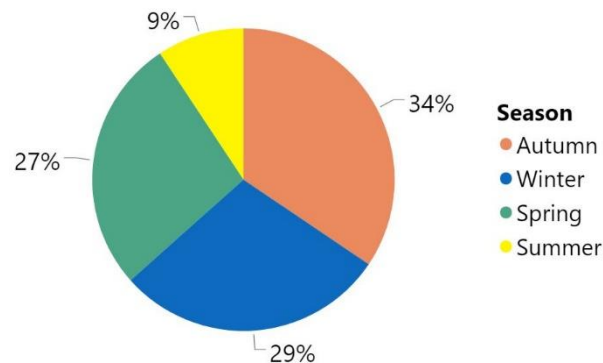
Peak season for visitation is from April to October, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds in autumn and winter during the school holiday periods.

Occupancy is lowest from November to March.

Visitors per month (K=1000 visitors)



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Trezona Campground: 1244 people per year (41 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Brachina East Campground: 1240 (39 per cent)
- Aroona Campground: 1023 (40 per cent)
- Koolamon Campground: 721 (62 per cent)
- Acraman Campground: 724 (39 per cent)

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	★★★★ Good
Access roads – bitumen	★★★☆☆ Limited
Internet connectivity	★★☆☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★★ Good
Power and water	★★☆☆☆ Basic

Assets of interest and facilities:

Wilpena Pound Visitor Centre, including a restaurant and small supermarket. Wilpena Resort with accommodation and camping opportunities. Good walking network. Good facilities including BBQ and picnic spots available. 10 campgrounds managed by National Parks and Wildlife Service SA.



Government of
South Australia



Mount Remarkable National Park and Southern Flinders Ranges National Park

Mount Remarkable National Park

About the park

[Mount Remarkable National Park](#) offers the best of both worlds. It's within easy reach of Adelaide – just over three hours' drive – and a perfect stop-over destination for visitors exploring more far-flung regions of SA.

With diverse wildlife and campgrounds with good facilities, it's easy to see how Mount Remarkable makes for a no-fuss weekend away.

It's a popular destination for bushwalking, with trails for all ages and abilities, and its Willowie Forest area offers an enticing network of mountain biking trails that wind through the foothills of the Mount Remarkable Range.

Visitation data

Online booking information shows that approximately 30,000 people visited the park in the 2018-19 financial year – 63 per cent of them from SA. The remainder includes 13 per cent from VIC, 7 per cent from NSW, 3 per cent from WA. International* visitors account for 6 per cent.

Of these visitors, 34 per cent booked to stay overnight.

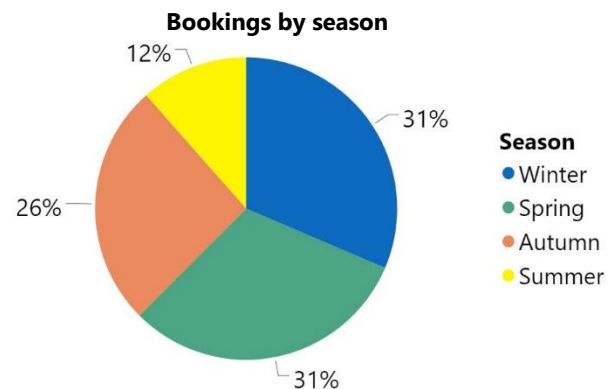
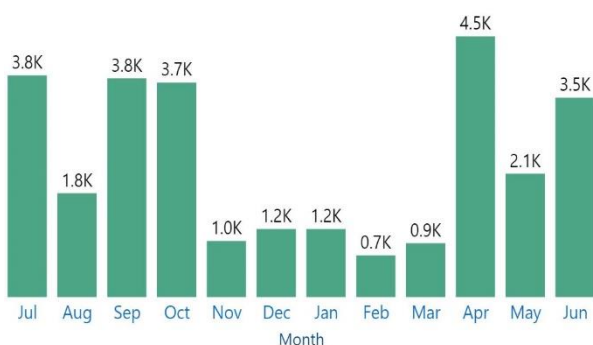
*Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from April to October, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds and accommodation being over the school holiday periods.

Occupancy is lowest from November to March, coinciding with the hotter weather.

Visitors per month (Mambray and Baroota)



Accommodation usage

- The park's most used campgrounds include:
 - Mambray Creek Campground: 8649 people per year (59 per cent of visitors are from SA)
 - Backpack camping sites**: 2188 (77 per cent)
 - Baroota Campground: 1201 (65 per cent)
- Built Accommodation include:
 - Mambray Creek Cabin: 212 (average stay 1.6 nights)
 - Alligator Lodge: 143 (average stay 2.2 nights)

**Backpack camping sites are accessible via overnight walking trails through Mount Remarkable National Park. These camping sites are primarily booked by schools (up to 100 schools per year) for student camping trips.

Assets and services report

Co-management	—
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★★★★ Good
Internet connectivity	★★★☆☆ Limited
Camping opportunities	★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★★ Good
Power and water	★★★☆☆ Limited

Assets of interest and facilities:

Great walking network with overnight walks options. Good facilities including BBQ and picnic spots available.

Southern Flinders Ranges National Park

A \$10 million investment is being proposed for the creation of the Southern Flinders Ranges National Park, which would span from Beetaloo to Wilmington and include Mount Remarkable National Park.

This new nature-based tourism destination would connect the natural landscapes of the region and draw people into the local communities.

This project offers an opportunity to link well-established national parks, like Mount Remarkable National Park, with land recently acquired for conservation and opened reservoirs, to create a vast, connected park of national significance.

The area's rugged landscape features ranges, peaks, gorges and forests, including high-quality native vegetation and reservoirs.

The area is linked by the Heysen (hiking) and Mawson (cycling) trails and includes sites of outstanding natural beauty such as Mount Remarkable National Park and Telowie Gorge Conservation Park.

As part of the parks' creation:

- an international mountain bike destination will be developed at Mount Remarkable
- trails for hiking, cycling and horse riding will be upgraded, and a new iconic multiday hike will be created
- campgrounds will be upgraded and expanded, particularly to cater for caravans
- existing facilities will be upgraded, including a new visitor information centre.



Witjira National Park, Munga-Thirri-Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Regional Reserve

Witjira National Park

About the park

In the state's far north is [Witjira National Park](#). A truly special park, it features more than 120 mound springs and the National Heritage-listed Dalhousie Springs, used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years as a source of food, shelter and medicine.

With delightful camping spots and quality visitor facilities, as well as the enticing warm waters of the main spring, Witjira is one of SA's most popular outback parks.

To add to the interest, the area is home to five unique fish species and rare aquatic life found nowhere else in the world.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters near Witjira estimated that approximately 24,000 vehicles used the access road in 2018.

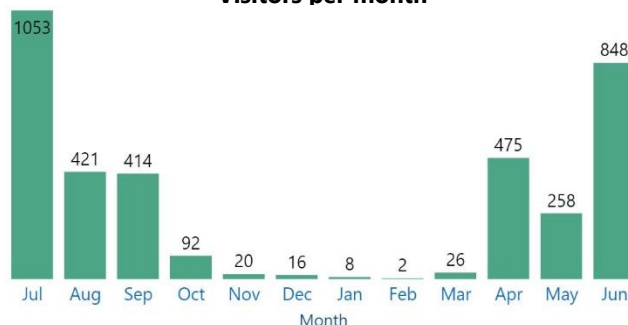
Online booking information shows that 3633 people visited and camped at the park in the 2018-19 financial year, with 28 per cent of these visitors from SA. The remainder includes 27 per cent from VIC, 21 per cent from NSW, 13 per cent from QLD and 3 per cent from the Australian Capital Territory. Altogether 2039 people also had access to this park through the purchase of a Desert Parks Pass.

Of those who visited the park, 65 per cent booked to stay overnight. The average length of stay was 1.6 nights and the average number of people per booking was 2.6.

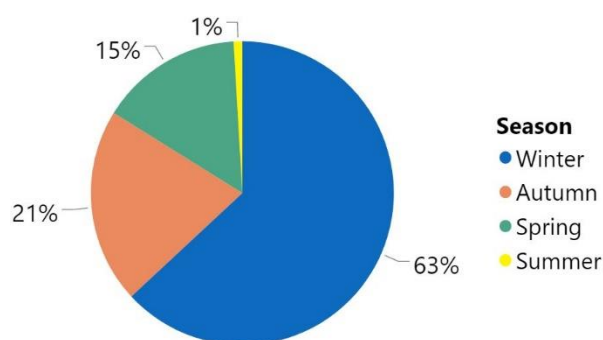
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from April to September. The highest occupancy at campgrounds is from June to July, while the lowest is from October to March.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Dalhousie Springs Campground: 2214 people per year (25 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- 3 O'clock Creek Campground: 65 (54 per cent)

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	—
Access roads – bitumen	4WD only
Internet connectivity	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping opportunities	★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★ Limited
Power and water	☆☆☆ Basic

Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Regional Reserve

About the park

[Munga-Thirri-Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Regional Reserve](#) is in the centre of the Simpson Desert, one of the world's best examples of a parallel dunal desert.

The park features a wide variety of wildlife preserved in a landscape of varied dune systems, extensive playa lakes, spinifex grasslands and acacia woodlands.

The park provides a challenging 4WD journey through to Witjira National Park. Visitors can camp within 100 metres of the public access tracks in the Munga-Thirri-Simpson Desert Regional Reserve and Conservation Park, but there are no visitor facilities. In 2018-19, 2039 people also had access to this park through purchase of a Desert Parks Pass.

Note: Parks in the Simpson Desert in SA and QLD are closed from 1 December to 15 March. Visitors must purchase a Desert Parks Pass to access these parks.

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	—
Access roads – bitumen	 4WD only
Internet connectivity	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping opportunities	★☆☆ Basic
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	☆☆☆ Nil
Power and water	☆☆☆ Nil



Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park

About the park

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is where you will find Australia's largest salt lake – Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda.

The lake's catchment area extends across four states and territories and is the lowest point in Australia.

Flood waters cover the lake once every eight years on average and it's then that it becomes a breeding site, teeming with waterbirds descending in the thousands, including pelicans, silver gulls, red-necked avocets, banded stilts and gull-billed terns.

Viewing the flooded lake and desert from a plane is a must-see, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Conversely, when it's dry, visitors may experience a sense of isolation standing on the lake edge and seeing nothing as far as the eye can see.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters on the road to the park estimate approximately 18,000 vehicle trips on the access road in 2018. In 2018-19, 2039 people also had access to this park through a Desert Parks Pass.

Online booking information shows 1803 people visited in the 2018-19 financial year, with 31 per cent of them from SA. The remainder includes 21 per cent from VIC, 19 per cent from NSW, 16 per cent from QLD and 4 per cent from WA.

Of those who booked online to enter the park 49 per cent also booked to stay overnight. The average number of nights stayed was two and people per booking was 2.5.

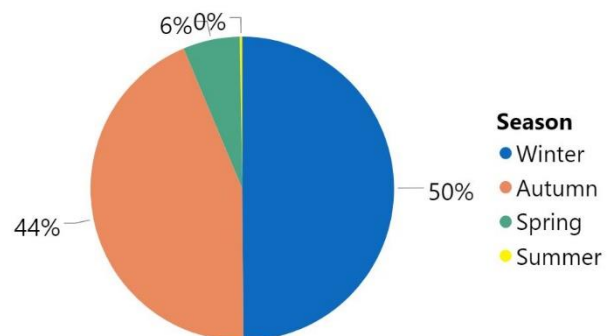
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is generally from April to October. The highest occupancy at the campground is in June and the lowest is from November to February.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's campground is:

- Halligan Bay Point Campground: 864 people per year (30 per cent of visitors are from SA).

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	☆☆☆ Nil
Access roads – bitumen	☆☆☆ Nil
Internet connectivity	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping opportunities	★☆☆ Basic
Camping Facilities (toilets, showers)	★☆☆ Basic
Power and water	☆☆☆ Nil

Assets of interest and facilities:

Flights are available over the lake from nearby towns

There is one campground and toilet facilities available

Innamincka Regional Reserve and Malkumba - Coongie Lakes National Park

Innamincka Regional Reserve

About the park

Innamincka Regional Reserve is a park of contrasts, ranging from the life-giving wetlands of the Cooper Creek system to the red sands of the arid outback.

Shaded by gums, the park's Cullyamurra waterhole provides a relaxing place for camping, a spot of fishing or exploring by canoe or boat.

The heritage-listed park headquarters and interpretation centre give an insight into the history of the area. Visitors can explore the sites where famous Australian explorers Burke and Wills died, and see the historic Dig Tree site (across the border in Queensland), which once played a significant part in their ill-fated expedition.

Visitation data

Online booking information shows that 1103 people visited the park in the 2018-19 financial year. However, this number is an underestimation of visitors as it doesn't include agent bookings, visitors who camp in the town common (council land) or stay in accommodation in the town of Innamincka. 2039 people also had access to this park through purchase of a Desert Parks Pass.

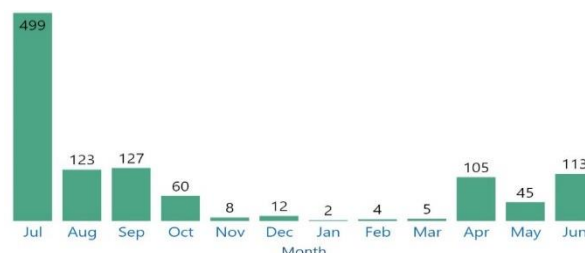
From the online booking information, 46 per cent of visitors were from SA, 20 per cent were from QLD, 14 per cent were from NSW, 13 per cent were from VIC, 4 per cent from ACT and 3 per cent were from WA.

Of those who booked online to enter the park 51 per cent also booked to stay overnight. The average length of stay booked was 3.7 nights and the average number of people per booking was 2.6.

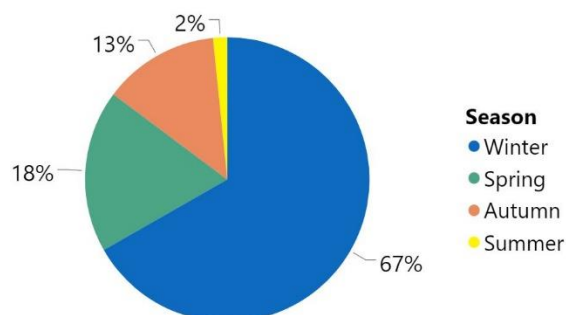
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from April to September, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds in July.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Cullyamurra Waterhole Campground: 338 people per year (43 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Minkie Waterhole Campground: 51 (68 per cent)
- Queerbidie Campground: 126 (40 per cent)
- Kings Site Campground: 32 (50 per cent)
- Burkes Grave Campground: 21 (40 per cent)

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	—
Access roads – bitumen	★★★☆☆ Limited
Internet connectivity	★★☆☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	★★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★☆☆ Limited
Power and water	★★☆☆☆ Basic

Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park

About the park

Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park is a Ramsar wetland of international importance and is one of the most spectacular of SA's natural attractions.

The wetland transforms into a breeding ground for an enormous number of migratory birds from around the world and plays host to diverse wildlife including fish, reptiles and frogs.

Motorboats, campfires and fishing are not permitted in the park, ensuring a genuine wilderness experience.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters on the road to the park estimated there were approximately 5000 vehicle trips on the access road in 2018.

Online booking information shows that 394 people visited in the 2018-19 financial year, with 15 per cent from SA. The remainder included 35 per cent from QLD, 24 per cent from VIC, 22 per cent from NSW and 3 per cent from the ACT. Altogether 2039 people also had access to this park through purchase of a Desert Parks Pass.

Of those who booked online to enter the park 32 per cent also booked to stay overnight. The average length of stay booked was 2.6 nights and the average number of people per booking was three.

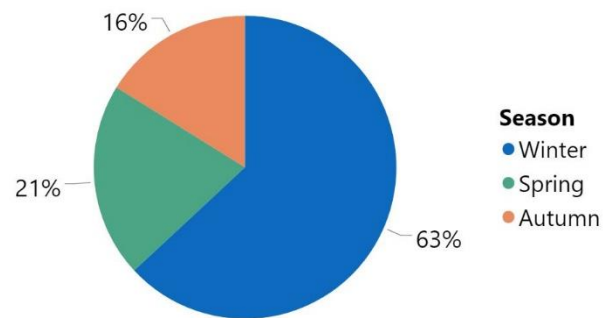
Peak and off-peak season

Visiting season is dependent on flooding and road closures, but peak season for visitation is generally from July to September. Occupancy at campgrounds is lowest from November to March.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Malkumba-Coongie Lakes Campground: 74 people per year (43 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Kudriemitchie Campground 13 (43 per cent)

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	✓
Built accommodation	☆☆☆☆ Nil
Access roads – bitumen	★★★☆☆ Limited
Internet connectivity	★★☆☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	★★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★☆☆ Limited
Power and water	★★☆☆☆ Basic

Kanku – Breakaways Conservation Park

About the park

[Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park](#) is a registered Aboriginal heritage site and is one of SA's outback jewels.

Located on the doorstep of Coober Pedy – Australia's most famous opal mining town – the Breakaways are a striking landscape of colourful sandstone flat-topped mesas surrounded by an ancient inland sea.

The picturesque land formations, the 'moon plain' and the dog fence, make this an unforgettable outback experience.

Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park is owned by the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (AMYAC) and is under a unique co-management agreement between the AMYAC, the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

Visitation data

As the Coober Pedy Visitor Information Centre manages entry permits for the park, booking information is not available about visitation to Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park.

Data for the nearby town of Coober Pedy shows the town attracts approximately 17 per cent of visitors that travel to the Flinders Ranges and Outback region, and about 10 per cent of total overnight stays within the region.

The total value of Coober Pedy's tourism output is estimated at \$23.8 million, which is 14.5 per cent of the value of Coober Pedy's total output.

According to Tourism Research Australia, 84 per cent of all overnight visitors to Coober Pedy are domestic visitors and the average length of stay is three nights

Of the 16 per cent of visitors who come from overseas, most are from the United Kingdom and Germany, with the United States accounting for the remainder. The length of stay for international visitors is an average of two nights.

** Coober Pedy Council (2019) Coober Pedy Economic Growth and Investment Strategy*

Peak and off-peak season

Coober Pedy is a major stopover between Adelaide and Darwin on The Explorers Way, and attracts visitors all year.

Peak season for visitation is from April to September, aligning with the cooler weather.

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of parks' volunteer groups	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	—
Built accommodation	☆☆☆ Nil
Access roads bitumen	★★☆ Limited
Internet connectivity	★★☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	☆☆☆ Nil
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★☆ Limited
Power and water	★★☆ Basic

Assets of interest and facilities:

There is no camping or accommodation available within this park.



Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park

About the park

Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park has spectacular terrain that can be explored through the many hiking trails or via the 4WD tracks that lead you deep into the heart of the rugged landscape. The park is a haven for many rare and endangered plants and animals.

There are several hiking trails to explore the park including the Italowie Gorge Hike which takes you past Mount McKinlay Spring or the Weetootla Gorge Hike which meanders through the stunning Weetootla Gorge.

There are several tracks to explore the park and its surrounding areas by car. Most tracks are accessible by 2WD, although the Wortupa Loop Track and the track to Lake Frome require 4WDs.

Visitation data

Park entry is free, however fees apply for camping and accommodation within the park. Online booking information shows 1008 people stayed overnight in the park in the 2018-19 financial year, 66 per cent of those stayed in camping sites and 33 per cent stayed in heritage accommodation. Of those who stay overnight in the park 42 per cent of them were from SA, the remainder includes 20 per cent from VIC, 18 per cent from NSW, 6 per cent from QLD and 1 per cent from WA.

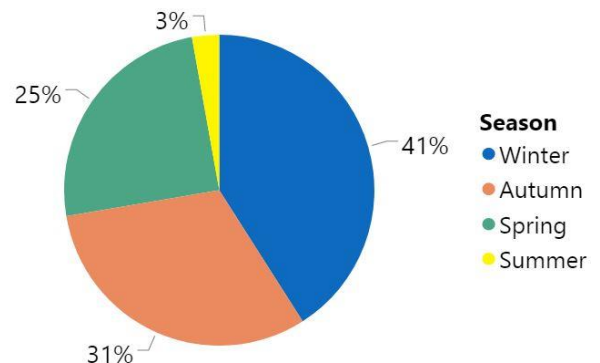
The average number of nights stayed was three and people per booking was three.

Peak and off-peak season

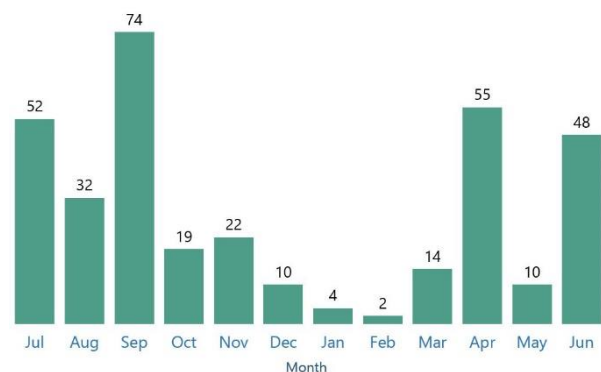
Peak season for visitation is generally from April to October. The highest occupancy at the park is in April and September and the lowest is from December to February.



Bookings by season



Visitors per month - Heritage Accommodation



Accommodation usage

The park's heritage accommodation receives 340 people per year (65 per cent of visitors are from SA). Of those, the most used accommodation are:

- Grindells Hut (4WD): 113 (61 per cent).
- Balcanoona Shearers Quarters: 91
- Balcanoona Managers Quarters: 26 (89 per cent)
- Balcanoona Standard room: 45 (14 per cent)
- Balcanoona woolshed: 6
- Nudlamutana Hut: 45 (73 per cent)

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Grindells Hut Campground (4WD): 313 (42 per cent)
- Weetootla Gorge Campground: 245 (30 per cent).
- Italowie Gap Campground: 77 (41 per cent)
- Arcoona 4WD and high 2WD Campground: 31 (36 per cent)

Assets and services report

Co-management	✓
Management plan	✓
'Friends of Parks' volunteer group	✓
Recent infrastructure investment	—
Built accommodation	✓
Access roads – bitumen	☆☆☆☆ Nil
Internet connectivity	☆☆☆☆ Nil
Camping opportunities	★☆☆☆ Basic
Camping Facilities (toilets, showers)	★☆☆☆ Basic
Power and water	☆☆☆☆ Nil

Assets of interest and facilities: Public toilet and shower facilities are available at Balcanoona (park headquarters).

Disclaimer

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data, DEW, its agents, officers and employees make no representations, either express or implied, that the data is accurate or fit for any purpose and expressly disclaims all liability for loss or damage arising from reliance upon the data.





Government of
South Australia

