

Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park



Fact Sheet

Spectacular caves and limestone features are the highlights of the 1 499 hectare Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park.

Limestone cave systems are not common in sub tropical Australia and the caves at Cutta Cutta are the only such caves accessible to the public. Distinguishing this cave system from those seen in southern parts of Australia are the obvious links between the caves and the landscape above. You can see these links during the walk to the caves, as well as during a tour of Cutta Cutta Cave.

Access

Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park is accessed from the Stuart Highway 30 km south of Katherine. The carpark and visitor centre are just one kilometre along a sealed road from the Highway.

The Park is open daily from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. However, due to wet season rains (December - March) the caves and the Park are closed. The most comfortable time of year to visit the Park is between May and August.

What to See and Do

The caves are the highlight of the Park, although you can also enjoy a short woodland walk.

Tours - Private guided tours provide an opportunity to see Cutta Cutta Cave. Tours operate daily during the visitor season with the caves generally closed for the year due to flooding - from December 1. **Tours from 9.00, 10.00 and 11.00 am and 1.00, 2.00 and 3.00 pm.** Bookings are not required. Call (08) 8972 2964 for further information.



Walking - The Tropical Savanna Walk begins near the carpark and provides a close up experience of the open tropical

savanna woodland that dominates the area. Allow 20 minutes.

The 650 m **Karst Walk** to the caves is accessible only to those going on a tour.

Visitor Facilities

An interpretive display about the Park is located in the small kiosk. Tour tickets, cold refreshments and souvenirs are available here. Near the kiosk are toilets and sheltered picnic tables.

Flora and Fauna

The Park is dominated by tropical savanna and dotted with small clusters of rainforest thickets over pockets of chemically weathered limestone (karst) landscape.

The karst landscape contains many nooks and crannies which shelter wildlife during the heat of day. It provides protection for fire sensitive plants and rainforest species, such as the Hairy-fruited Banyan. Rainforest plants are able to grow in a seemingly dry landscape because their roots find moisture in the humid air of caves below.

Birds you may see in the Park include Common Koels, Figbirds and Bowerbirds, which help maintain scattered patches of rainforest by pollinating flowers and spreading seeds, while also being dependent on the rainforest plants for food and shelter.

You may also see various lizards, Agile Wallaby, Euro and Antilopine Wallaroo in the savannas. The harmless Brown Tree Snake is often seen in the cave, but you are less likely to see any of the five species of bat residing in these caves.

Two species of blind shrimp that inhabit the cave have their closest relatives in Madagascar, off the coast of Africa.

Safety and Comfort

- Observe park safety signs
- Carry and drink plenty of water
- Wear a shady hat, sunscreen and insect repellent
- Enclosed shoes are required for the cave tour
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day

Please Remember

- Put your rubbish in the bin or take it away with you
- The cave tours are guided; please do not enter the caves unattended
- While underground, refrain from touching or damaging the calcite formation
- Keep to the walking tracks
- All cultural items and wildlife are protected
- Pets are not permitted in the Park
- Nets, traps and firearms are not permitted
- A permit is required for Drone use - conditions apply and it must be obtained prior to your arrival in the Park
- Check that your vehicle is not transporting pests like weeds and cane toads.

History

Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park is part of a greater area that *Jawoyn* people have a long association with, but there is no evidence to suggest they used the caves.

A stockman found the main cave in about 1900 and named it Smith's Cave, but during World War II servicemen visiting the area called it 16 Mile Cave.

In 1967 the area was handed to the Northern Territory Reserves Board (now Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory) and cave tours began shortly after. In 1979 the area was renamed Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park.

Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Park Tours
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