



The Coorong National Park

The Coorong National Park (CNP) is the largest of 10 Parks along the Limestone Coast of south-eastern South Australia. The word “Coorong”, derived from an Aboriginal word “karangk” meaning narrow neck, refers to the series of long shallow water channels forming a single saline lagoon over 100km in length. The CNP includes the long, narrow Youngusband Peninsula, which stretches from north-west of Kingston SE to the Murray mouth. The Princes Highway, running between Meningie and Kingston SE allows easy vehicular access to, and scenic views of, much of the CNP.

Overview - The 50,000 ha CNP was declared in 1966 to conserve the distinctive landscape, coastal dune system, lagoons, wetlands and coastal vegetation and the great variety of birds, animals and fish that live in or visit the area.

Aboriginal occupation - The area is an archaeological site of national importance with middens and burial sites throughout the CNP giving evidence of Aboriginal occupation over many thousands of years by the Ngarrindjeri People. To learn more of their life in the area, visit <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/orig/ngurunderi/ngframe.htm> .

Bird life – The CNP is possibly best known worldwide for its birdlife - a list of local birds is available at http://www.riverland.net.au/~peterw/birdingsa/sites-6.htm#_Toc83446022. As a habitat for numerous species of migratory birds and as a refuge for birds in times of drought, the Coorong is important in a national and international sense. The Coorong was included on the list of 'Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat', maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources on 21 December, 1975 and the 'Agreement between Australia, Japan and China for the 'Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and their Environment' on 30 April, 1981. It is classified as Ramsar Wetlands International Site No. 5AU025 – further information on its Ramsar importance is available at <http://www.wetlands.org/RSDb/default.htm> or from Ramsar itself at <http://www.ramsar.org/> .

4WDing, bushwalking, canoeing and camping are all popular activities in the CNP. The only place you need 4WD is if you want to travel over the sand dunes of the Youngusband Peninsula and along the ocean beach. All other camping spots, walking trails, historic sites etc are accessible with a normal vehicle. 4WD access to the beach is via several tracks across the Coorong, the main ones being the Tea Tree (only when dry) and 42 Mile Crossings. All vehicles used within the CNP must be registered and their operators licensed.

Fishing is another popular recreational pursuit within the Park. Ensure your angling and netting activities conform with legislation by checking the Primary Industries and Resources SA site at <http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/dhtml/ss/section.php?sectID=1135> .

Access - Camping facilities are available but camping permits are required for staying over night – see web page <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/parks.pl> for the latest fee structures.

Further information, spectacular photography, and local history is available from a number of web sites – here are two worth exploring - <http://www.thecoorong.com/> and <http://www.murrayriver.com.au/regions/coorong.htm>

SAAFWDC activities – Over the past years, a number of projects have been undertaken in the CNP by affiliated clubs. As part of the 2005 Kesab Clean Up Australia campaign, members from four of our clubs collected in excess of 100 bags of rubbish from the Coorong ocean beach. While some of this rubbish undoubtedly came from other sources, some of it must be contributable to visitors in 4WDs, which is a problem we must try and correct through education.

Our Association, via the NRAU, negotiates with Park officials to see that tracks within the CNP remain open. **YOU can help** – become an educated 4WD driver, engage 4wd on the tracks, lower tyre pressures when sand driving, seek (then heed) advice as to prevailing conditions, and drive with the environment and other users in mind. Do not attempt to tow trailers along the Park's beach tracks. Pitch in and do your bit at working bees - it is usually the same people doing the job all the time.

In the end, it is all up to us, the users, whether tracks in the CNP will remain open.



**We
Need
You**

(and
You
And
You)

THE NRAU NEEDS NEW DELEGATES

This Unit of the South Australian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Inc sets the policy direction of the Association regarding matters pertaining to environment and represents it on matters of access. This involves preparation of detailed written submissions to government and other interested parties in presentation of the views of the Association and its members.

In addition to various other tasks, members of the Unit are involved in three sub-committees or working groups. They are the **Public Access Working Group**, the **Recreational Vehicle Advisory Committee**, and the **Ngarkat Conservation Park Advisory Committee**.

Due to lack of numbers, some members of the Unit are involved in all three sub-committees, and are finding it too time consuming to maintain. If any of these working groups fold, it means access to some of the areas we all love may be in jeopardy – please consider this carefully.

Several NRAU members have been with the Unit since it commenced, and would like to ease out of some of the responsibilities they have shouldered for so long.

Our Association currently has 32 affiliated clubs, each of which have a number of members, ranging from the 20s into the 100s. Some clubs have never had a delegate at the NRAU, but if every second club could now provide one delegate, that would really help to spread the load.

Apathy and lack of action will lose us access in the future – who will be left negotiating to keep tracks open – **it could have been YOU.**

TRACKS CLOSED TO PUBLIC


The Younghusband Beach is closed 5kms from the Murray Mouth while dredging operations are in place. There is currently no 4WD access to the Murray Mouth.

NGARKAT TRACKS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The next Interclub Working Bee will be held 14 to 16 May 2005. Your Club has been sent full details – please support this very worthwhile activity, and help keep some parks tracks open.

PASTORAL ACCESS ROUTE UPDATE

Negotiations are underway in relation to two further Public Access Routes (PARs) across land held under pastoral lease. One proposed PAR is to Secret Rocks Paddock on Cooyerdoo Station west of Whyalla and the other will link the Stuart Highway with the Lake Torrens National Park, across South Gap Station, north of Port Augusta.

NGARKAT SIGNAGE	ENGAGE 4.W.D. & LOWER TYRE PRESSURE TO 130 Kpa - (18 Psi) 
INFLATE TYRES NOW	Following recommendations from the Recreational Vehicle Advisory Committee, signs worded as shown here will be erected by Parks Officers at the start and end of the Border Track in the near future.

Warning: most States now have large fines for driving on closed tracks.

The South Australian unsealed Outback road network is one of the State's greatest assets. They can be dusty when dry, or prone to flood damage after rain. The roads are often closed after rain to prevent further damage and to ensure the safety of road users. Severe penalties apply for motorists travelling on closed roads.

Contact the **Road Conditions Hotline** on 1300 361 033 for the most up-to-date information.

NB - Just because a track is shown on a map does NOT mean the public can access that track - tracks shown on the "Outback" RAA Map are open to the public – have you obtained a copy of the latest edition yet?

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CLUBS - If your club wishes to contribute in any way to this newsletter, please forward details to The Editor, NRAU Newsletter, PO Box 178, ENFIELD PLAZA 5085, or via email to bigdaddy@picknowl.com.au