



Limestone Coast

National parks visitation snapshot

The region

Known and loved for its picturesque port towns, South Australia's Limestone Coast region is famous for the Coonawarra, Padthaway and Cape Jaffa wine regions, its impressive volcanic craters and its tranquil mountain lakes – namely Mount Gambier's Blue Lake.

Being SA's most easterly tourism region, conveniently positioned en route to Victoria, the region is a drawcard for South Australians and Victorians alike.

It really has it all when it comes to natural wonders – caves, ponds, sinkholes and coastal parks are just part of the region's attraction.

Tourism

In 2018, the Limestone Coast region contributed \$350 million to SA's tourism expenditure of \$6.8 billion.

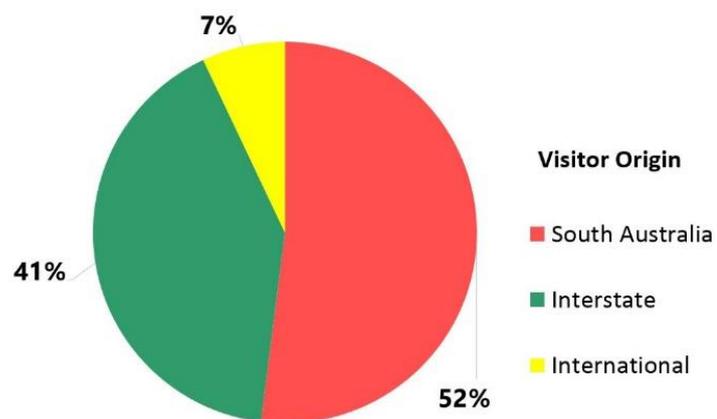
The region attracts approximately 617,000 overnight visitors per year (2016-18). Intrastate visitors account for marginally more than half of all visitors, and of these, slightly more are from the Adelaide area than from regional SA. A high proportion of visitors are from interstate, with 3 in 4 interstate visitors coming from Victoria.

The Limestone Coast has more than 34 visitor accommodation options*, totalling 1,005 available rooms. Over the course of a year, occupancy rates average at 45 per cent – peaking at 50 per cent in October, November, January and March and dropping to 37 per cent in the winter months.

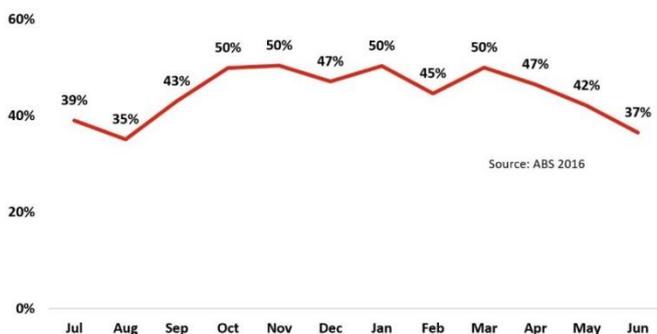
For more in-depth analysis, view the [SA Tourism Commission regional profiles](#).

The opportunity

The Limestone Coast's regional strategy is to increase overnight visitor volumes from international and domestic markets and convert some existing day-trippers to stay overnight. Being a predominantly self-drive visitor market, the aim is to leverage existing touring routes and promote and develop hero tourism experiences and events that reflect the region's uniqueness.

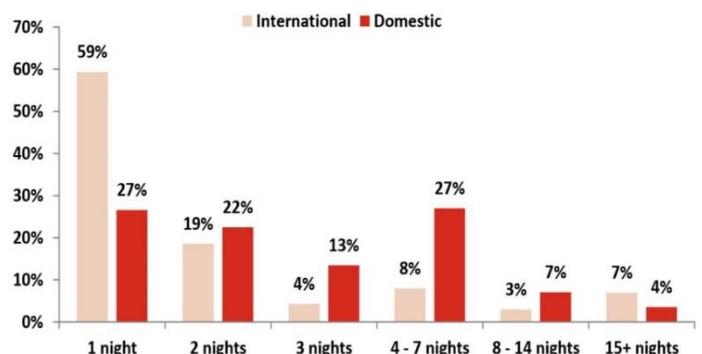


Monthly occupancy rates 2015-16



*Hotels, motels and service apartments with 15+ rooms

Length of visit to Limestone Coast



National parks

The Limestone Coast's national parks are some of the state's most alluring. With the spectacular World Heritage-listed [Naracoorte Caves National Park](#), the sandy coastline parks from Robe through to Canunda, and the snorkelling and diving havens that are [Piccaninnie](#) and [Ewens Ponds](#), it's no wonder visitors hardly have time to come up for air.

On average, 8 per cent of South Australians surveyed said they visited a park on the Limestone Coast every year. And locals know they're onto a good thing too – 84 per cent of those surveyed had visited at least one park that year (2018-19).

With its archaeological significance, [Naracoorte Caves National Park](#) is the region's most popular park. Other stand-outs have more of an aquatic theme – [Little Dip Conservation Park](#), [Beachport Conservation Park](#), [Canunda National Park](#) and [Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park](#).

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



Beachport Conservation Park

About the park

Beachport Conservation Park's white sandy beaches, coastal flora and array of birdlife, coupled with its handy location on the doorstep of a popular holiday town, make this park well worth a visit. Adding to its charm are its weathered limestone cliffs and middens.

The park also adjoins Lake George, making it ideal for the sailing and fishing enthusiasts.

And for four-wheel drivers, the track that travels north through the park along the coast connects to Little Dip Conservation Park before reaching the south-east hotspot of Robe.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters near Beachport estimated that approximately 15,000 vehicles used the four-wheel drive track in 2008.

Online booking information shows approximately 1071 people camped at the park in the 2018-19 financial year, with 37 per cent of them from SA. The remainder include 42 per cent from VIC, 8 per cent from New South Wales, 3 per cent from Queensland and 3 per cent from Western Australia. International visitors* accounted for 5 per cent.

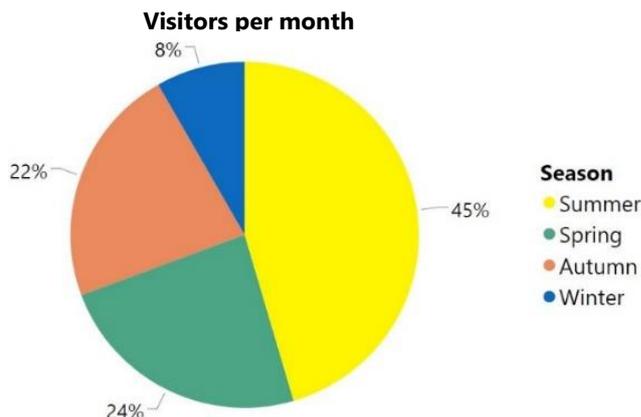
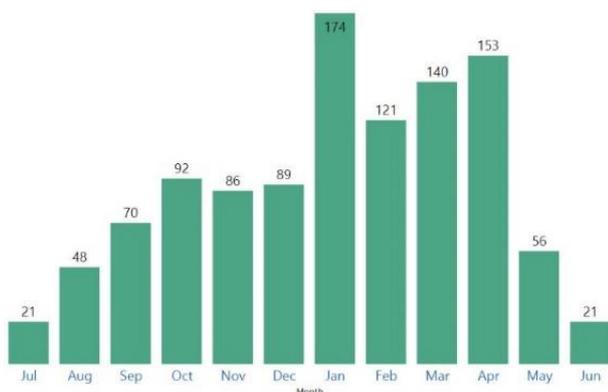
The average length of stay per booking was 1.6 nights (in national parks-managed campsites in the park) and the average number of people per booking was 2.7.

**Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified*

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from October to April, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds in January and April during the school holidays. Occupancy is at its lowest from November to March.

Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

The park's campground is:

- 3 Mile Bend Campground: 1071 people per year (37 per cent are from SA).

Assets and services report

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

Assets of interest and facilities: For Beachport Conservation Park there is one campground.

Little Dip Conservation Park and Upper South East Marine Park

About the park

Little Dip Conservation Park starts at the town of Robe and features a ruggedly beautiful coastline, including a large area of coastal sand dunes.

A number of small lakes can be found throughout the park, each with its own unique character, ranging from the open, marshy and shallow Lake Eliza to the very salty Old Man Lake, and the deep Fresh Dip Lake.

Adjacent to Little Dip Conservation Park lies the Upper South East Marine Park, which extends north to the southern Coorong and acts as an import feeding and resting ground for migratory and resident shorebirds.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters installed at the main park entry point from Robe estimated 28,217 vehicles entered the park trail (from 56,435 vehicle movements) in 2019.

Online booking information shows approximately 3079 people camped in the park during the 2018-19 financial year, with 45 per cent of them from SA. Of the remainder, 43 per cent were from VIC, with 4 per cent from NSW, 2 per cent from QLD and 1 per cent from WA. International visitors* accounted for approximately 3 per cent.

The average length of stay per booking was 1.7 nights (in national park-managed campsites) and the average number of people per booking was 2.7.

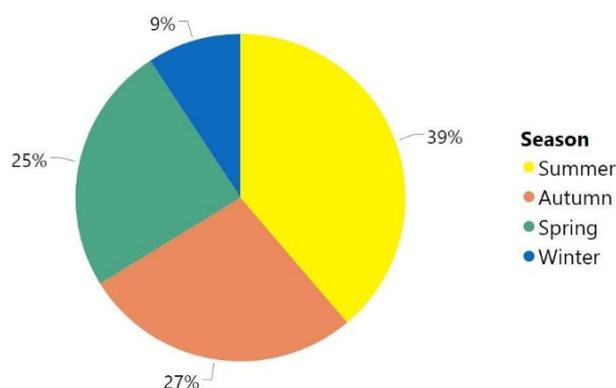
**Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified*

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from October to April, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds recorded in January and April during the school holidays.



Visitors per month



Accommodation usage

The park's campgrounds are:

- Long Gully Campground: 1337 people per year (45 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Stony Rise Campground: 797 (44 per cent)
- Old Man Lake Campground: 711 (49 per cent)
- The Gums Campground: 234 (41 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	☆☆☆☆ Nil

Assets of interest and facilities: Little Dip Conservation Park has four campgrounds.

Canunda National Park and Lower South East Marine Park

About the park

[Canunda National Park](#) boasts a spectacular coastline of cliffs and long stretches of surf beaches.

It borders with the [Lower South East Marine Park](#) and Canunda Sanctuary zone, and features a diversity of coastal habitats and freshwater spring lakes that emerge from the beach and provide a unique habitat for several species.

Canunda National Park offers great opportunities for visitors to enjoy bushwalking, observe local birdlife, and surf or snorkel in protected intertidal pools.

For four-wheel drivers, established tracks line the full length of the park.

Visitation data

Vehicle traffic counters showed approximately 40,000 vehicles used the coastal four-wheel drive track in 2008.

Online booking information shows approximately 2702 people camped in the park in the 2018-19 financial year, with 30 per cent of these visitors from SA. Of the remainder, 49 per cent were from VIC, 7 per cent from NSW, 5 per cent from QLD and 2 per cent from WA. International visitors* accounted for approximately 5 per cent.

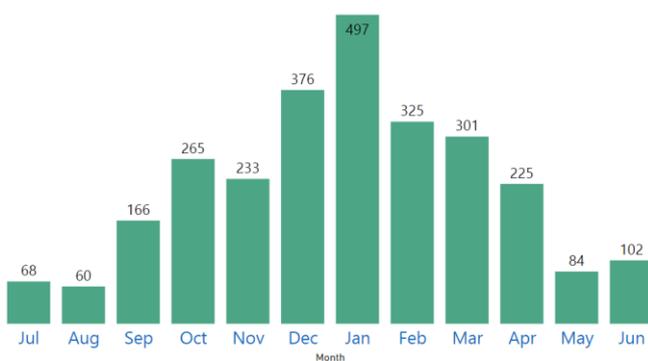
The average length of stay per booking was 1.7 nights and the average number of people per booking was 2.8.

**Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified*

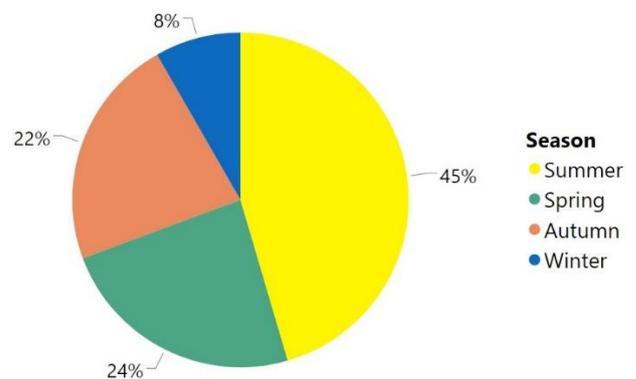
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from October to March, with the highest occupancy at campgrounds during summer from December to February.

Bookings by Season



Visitors per month



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds include:

- Cape Banks Campground: 849 people per year (19 per cent of visitors are from SA)
- Number 2 Rocks Campground: 492 (27 per cent)
- Kotgee Campground: 464 (42 per cent)
- Geltwood Campground: 407 (34 per cent)
- Nalawort Campground: 274 (42 per cent)
- Oil Rig Square Campground: 216 (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	★☆☆ Basic
Camping opportunities	★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★☆☆ Basic
Power and water	☆☆☆☆ Nil

Assets of interest and facilities:

Canunda National Park has six campgrounds and well established 4wd tracks.

Naracoorte Caves National Park

About the park

Naracoorte Caves National Park is SA's only World Heritage site and one of the world's most important fossil sites.

The caves preserve the most complete fossil record available for the period of time spanning several ice ages, the arrival of humans in the area and the extinction of Australia's iconic megafauna roughly 50,000 years ago.

Visitation data

Booking information for tours of the park show that approximately 56,667 people visited in the 2018-19 financial year. On average, each visitor went on 1.3 cave tours.

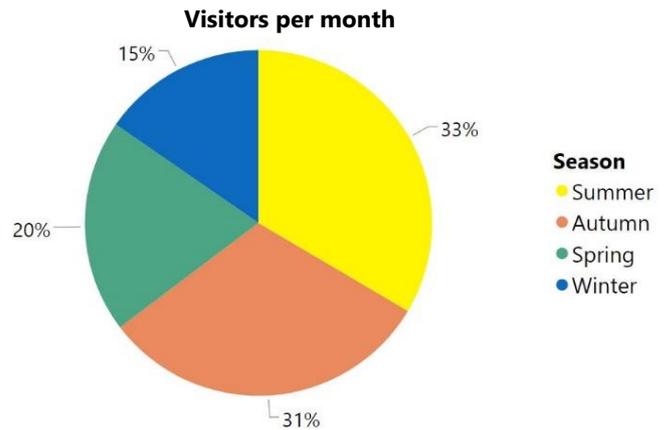
Online booking information identifies that 45 per cent of visitors were from SA. Of the remainder, 29 per cent were from VIC, 7 per cent were from NSW, 4 per cent were from QLD and 2 per cent were from WA. International visitors* accounted for 10 per cent.

The average number of people per booking was 3.2.

*Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season at the park is from December to April and off-peak season is considered to be June to September.



Accommodation usage

The park's most used campgrounds and accommodation include:

- Wirreanda Bunkhouse: 1213 people per year
- Naracoorte Caves Campground: 1448 (39 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	✓
Access roads – bitumen	★★★★ Good
Internet connectivity	★★★★ Good
Camping opportunities	★★★★ Good
Camping facilities (toilets, showers)	★★★★ Good
Power and water	★★★★ Good

Assets of interest and facilities:

- Wonambi Visitor Centre.
- Bunkhouse accommodation for up to 49 people.
- Powered caravan and motor home sites.
- BBQ facilities and camp kitchen.
- Guided tours occurring 364 days of the year.
- Established walking trails.
- Café located onsite.
- Established picnic areas.

Tantanoola Caves Conservation Park

About the park

Tantanoola Caves Conservation Park is set into a cliff-face. Being exposed to the constant pounding of the ocean, over time the sea has retreated leaving behind a cavern of interesting shells, pebbles and seal bones.

Tantanoola is one of Australia's few wheelchair-accessible caves, and has picturesque picnic-grounds and a cliff-top walking trail that offers panoramic views of the surrounding district.

Visitation data

Online booking information shows 17,284 people visited the park in the 2018-19 financial year, with 42 per cent from SA. Of the remainder, 32 per cent were from VIC, 6 per cent were from QLD and 6 per cent were from NSW. International visitors* accounted for 4 per cent.

The average number of people per booking was 3.6.

*Maximum estimated on 'other' postcodes identified

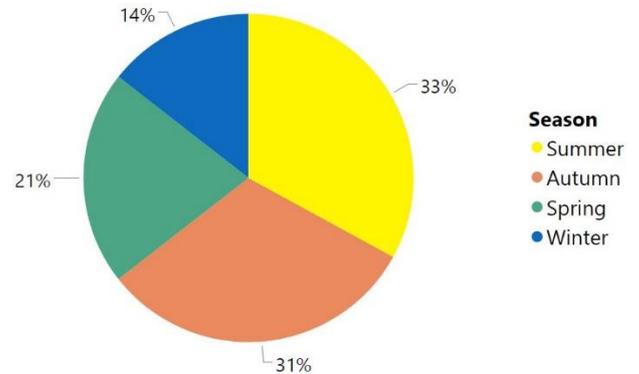
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season generally aligns with school holiday periods.

Visitation is lowest from June to September.



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

There is no camping or accommodation available within this park.

Assets and services report

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

Assets of interest and facilities:

Picnic areas.

Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park

About the park

[Piccaninnie Ponds Conservation Park](#) is best-loved for its spectacular underwater world, and is also recognised as a wetland of international significance.

For snorkelers and divers, the Chasm is one of the features that lures them to visit. It's a 100-metre deep sinkhole that was formed when freshwater rising to the surface of the ground under pressure eroded a weakness in the limestone.

This same process formed the park's large underwater cavern – The Cathedral – creating its majestic white walls of sculptured and scalloped limestone.

For visitors who prefer to explore above-ground, there's a great walking trail through coastal wattle and beard heath that leads them to the ponds' outlet. Or there's the adjacent [Lower South East Marine Park](#) with its reef systems and giant kelp forests.

Visitation data

Online booking information shows 2798 people purchased a snorkelling or diving permit to explore the ponds in the 2018-19 financial year, with 32 per cent from SA. Of the remainder, 54 per cent were from VIC, 8 per cent from NSW, 2 per cent from QLD and 1 per cent from WA.

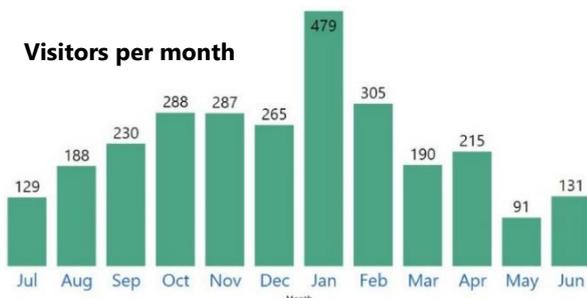
The average number of people per booking was three.

Time slots for snorkelling or diving are 1 hour. A minimum of two people and a maximum of four people per diving or snorkelling group is allowed, with a maximum of eight people in the ponds during any 1-hour timeslot.

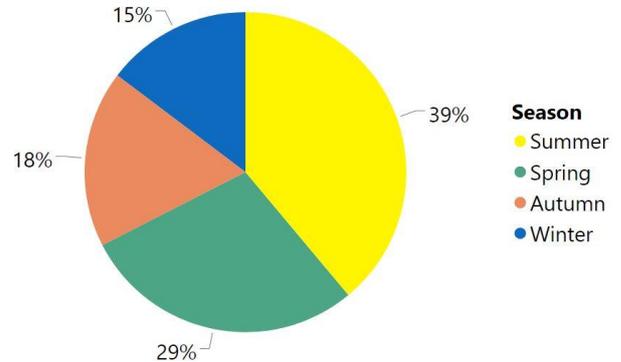
Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from May to September with the highest occupancy in June to July.

Visitors per month



Bookings by season



Accommodation usage

There is no camping or accommodation available within this park.

Assets and services report

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

Assets of interest and facilities:

Walking trails.

Diver and snorkeler change shed.

Ewens Ponds Conservation Park

About the park

Ewens Ponds Conservation Park is home to three connected spring-fed limestone ponds that are approximately 10 metres deep.

The clarity of the water enables plants to grow underwater to a depth of about 6 metres – some of these plants aren't found growing fully submerged anywhere else in the world.

Ewens Ponds can be explored by snorkelling along the shallow channels or scuba diving into the ponds.

Visitation data

Parks online booking information shows that 2314 people purchased a snorkelling or diving permit for Ewens Ponds from July 2019 to March 2020, with 50 per cent of these visitors from SA. Of the remainder, 37 per cent were from VIC, 7 per cent were from NSW and 2 per cent were from QLD.

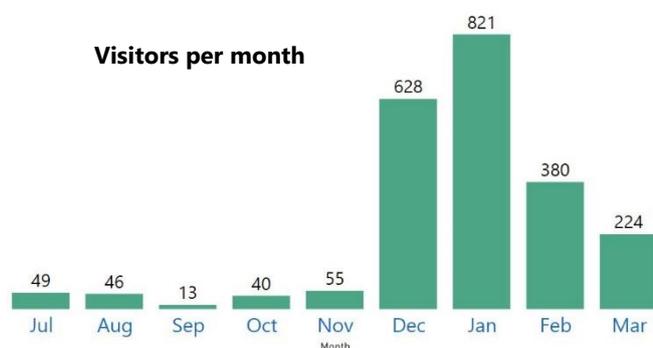
The average number of people per booking was three.

Due to the cold water and potential for damage to the aquatic environment, recreational swimming, aside from diving and snorkelling, is not allowed.

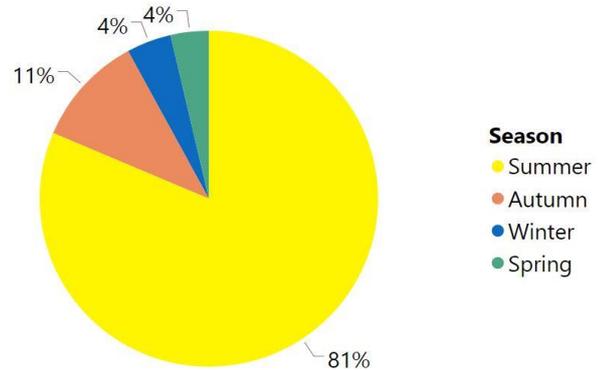
Time slots for snorkelling or diving are for 1 hour, and a minimum of two and a maximum of six people per diving or snorkelling group is allowed at any one time.

Peak and off-peak season

Peak season for visitation is from December to April. Each year, the ponds are closed and unavailable for snorkelling and diving from 1 September to 30 November (inclusive) to ensure the ponds are given time to rest and recover before an influx of visitors over summer.



Bookings by Season



Accommodation usage

There is no camping or accommodation available within this park.

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	☆☆☆ Nil
Facilities (toilets)	★★☆ Limited
Power and water	★★☆☆ Basic

Assets of interest and facilities:

Diver/snorkeler change shed.

There are picnic areas, toilets and disabled toilets located in this park.

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.