



THE WARRUMBUNGLES

A special retreat for man and wildlife

The Warrumbungle National Park is a focal point for the bushwalker, photographer, naturalist and casual tourist.

The Warrumbungles (or Bungles as they are often known) is one of the crowning glories of Australian national parks. Erupting from the surrounding plains, the peaks soar, almost menacing in their prehistoric grandeur. The peaks, weathered cores of long dead volcanoes, make a spectacular sight. The brooding presence of Carter Bluff, the jagged wall of the "Breadknife" or the lion crouch of Mt Namon are exciting images not easily forgotten.

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The park, founded in 1935, grew to its present size of 18,174 hectares in 1974. First seen by John Oxley in 1818, the mountains were named Arbuthnots Range. They were later renamed the Warrumbungles, an Aboriginal word meaning "crooked mountains"

A range of walking tracks to suit all tastes and abilities exists throughout the

park; from pleasant nature trails to strenuous climbs on some of the tougher sections.

One of the most popular walks in the park starts from Camp Pincham. The track winds its way slowly up Spirey Creek, where in the shaded valley kangaroos can often be seen. Grass trees, some as tall as 3m grow alongside many of the trails. It can take as long as 500 years for a grass tree to grow to 2m. At the end of the valley the track gains altitude and climbs past Wilsons Rest — magnificent views of Belougery Spire — and over the more exposed slopes of Sreng Bos. It's a steep climb from here as the track zig-zags alongside the "Breadknife" and on to the Grand High Tops.

One of the best sights is the sunrise when seen from the top of Mt Wambelong, the highest mountain in the park, at 1205m.

The effort to reach the summit is rewarded as the first beams of sunlight appear over the eastern ranges casting

shadows westward over the great plains.

There's a variety of accommodation within the park, from basic camping at Burbie Spring, Camp Pincham and Camp Wambelong, to Camp Blackman with its hot showers and laundry, or Canyon Camp where accommodation is "retired" corridor trams.

— Pictures and text: ALAN MELLING

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of Sydney

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The Warrumbungle National Park is 520km north-west of Sydney.



