

Sundown National Park

High 'traprock' country along the Queensland/New South Wales border has been carved by the Severn River and numerous creeks into sharp ridges and spectacular steep-sided gorges. This landscape contrasts dramatically with exposed granite hilltops and open valleys of nearby Girraween National Park and the Granite Belt.

The wilderness atmosphere of Sundown National Park and Sundown Resources Reserve (16 000ha in total) is maintained by keeping development to a minimum.

Pastoral and mining heritage

Sundown was once part of Glenlyon, Nundubbermere and Ballandean stations. These were subdivided into smaller leasehold blocks in the late 1800s. Although much of Sundown was cleared for grazing and fine wool production, this proved uneconomic. Reminders of the pastoral era including salt troughs, fences and stockyards can be seen.

Mining of mineral deposits — principally tin, copper and arsenic — occurred sporadically at Sundown from the 1870s. While rich pockets of ore were found and more than 70 men employed for a short time, deposits were mainly low grade and the mines were never successful financially.

Old surface diggings are scattered throughout the Red Rock area and remains of mining activity can be seen from the 4WD track.

The Sundown mines and treatment plant area is contaminated. Public access is restricted to the 4WD track.

Brush-tailed rock-wallabies were once common and widespread throughout the district. Competition with goats and predation by foxes has reduced Sundown's population to a small group at the northern end of the park.



A rugged landscape

Most of Sundown is 600–800m above sea level, with peaks rising to more than 1000m. It is known locally as 'traprock' country.

'Traprock' is a hard, dense rock formed from ancient marine sediments modified by heat and pressure. Intense minor faulting, folding and weathering resulted in layered rocks which formed steep ridges and gorges dropping to the Severn River.

Jibbinbar Mountain in the park's north-west and deeply-eroded Red Rock Gorge are intrusions of granite into the traprock. Two granite dykes run roughly parallel through the area. The most noticeable forms Rats Castle, a local landmark, and can be traced through the park and under the road near the southern entrance.

Vegetation

Vegetation changes gradually north/south reflecting differences in climate, elevation and soil type. Eucalypt forests of stringybark, yellow box, brown box and Tenterfield woollybutt grow on higher northern slopes. Woodlands of Caley's and silver-leaved ironbarks, tumbledown gum, white box and cypress pine grow in the south. Throughout the park, kurrajongs, red ash and larger wattles grow over understorey of hop bush, 'dead finish' and peach bush.

Steep-sided gorges shelter vine scrubs in which figs, stinging trees, pittosporums and numerous vines are common. Wilga, native willow and ooline (a rare and threatened species) grow at the southern end of the park but are usually associated with drier inland areas. Look for donkey, waxlip, greenhood, spotted hyacinth and other ground orchids flowering in spring. King and cymbidium orchids also occur.

River red gum, river oak, teatree and bottlebrush grow along the river.



Listen for scarlet and rose robins, satin bowerbirds and superb lyrebirds (left) in northern parts.

Animals

More than 130 species of birds live at Sundown —

some throughout the park and others only in specific habitats. Spotted bowerbirds, red-capped robins, spiny-cheeked and striped honeyeaters, whitefaces and red-winged parrots live in drier southern areas. Look for black ducks, wood ducks, herons, cormorants and tiny azure kingfishers along the river.

Wallaroos are common in steep rocky country but grey kangaroos prefer less sloping habitats. Other macropods include red-necked, swamp and pretty-face wallabies. Marsupial mice, gliders and possums can also be seen.

Things to do

Line fishing is permitted and people swim and canoe in the larger waterholes. Caution: Do not jump or dive into waterholes. They can be shallow and have submerged obstructions.

Broadwater camping area next to the river has individual sites, fireplaces and pit toilets. Use firewood and facilities provided to have a hot bush shower.








Scrub-filled gorges and secluded riverside campsites in the remote northern section can be reached on foot or in a 4WD. Burrow's Waterhole and Red Rock have pit toilets and mown campsites.

You can bush camp throughout the park and river banks make good campsites. To explore the park safely use the Hema 1:50 000 Sundown National Park map available from QPWS offices in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Girraween.

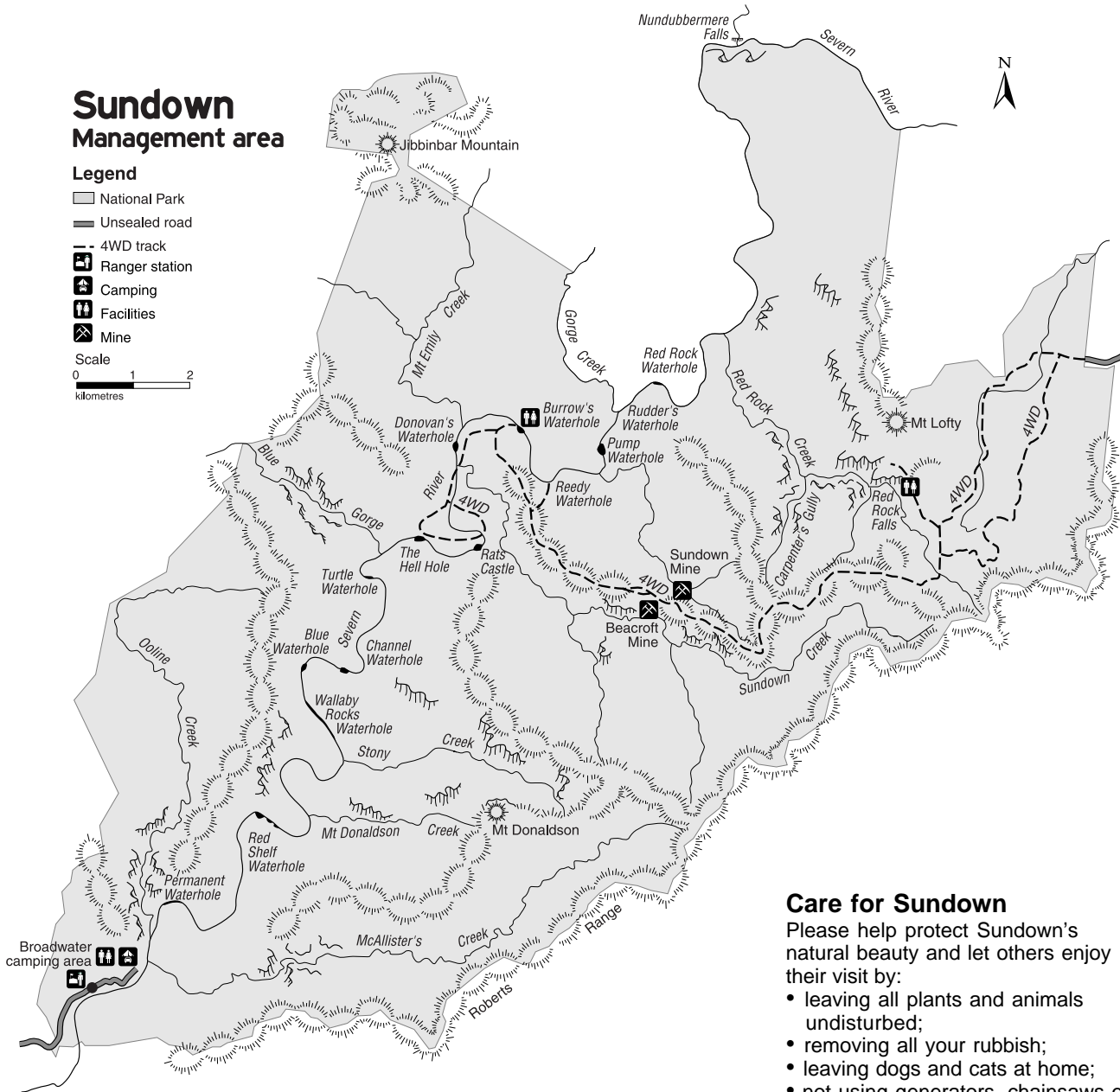
Camping and walking are best between May to September. Nights can be cold with frosts but are usually followed by warm, clear days. Summer weather can be humid and uncomfortable with temperatures sometimes reaching 40°C.

Sundown Management area

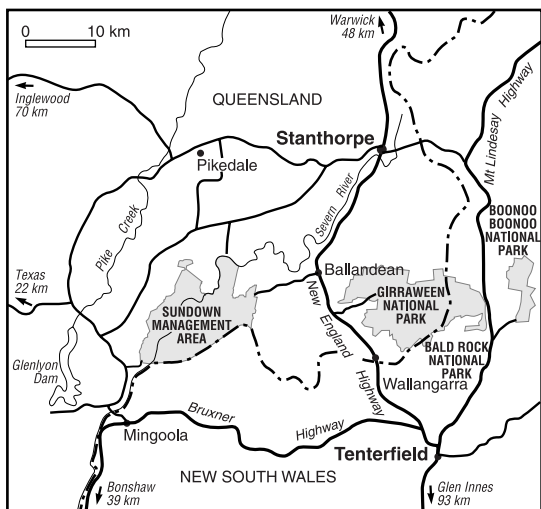
Legend

-  National Park
-  Unsealed road
-  4WD track
-  Ranger station
-  Camping
-  Facilities
-  Mine

Scale
0 1 2
kilometres



Locality Map



Access and supplies

Sundown is 250km south-west of Brisbane. A small general store at Glenlyon Dam has the only food and fuel supplies after leaving the New England Highway.

Conventional vehicles can be driven to Broadwater camping area and the Severn River at the southern end of the park via 75km of bitumen road from Stanthorpe and 4km of good gravel road.

From Tenterfield, travel north 5km then west along the Bruxner Highway 52km to Mingoola. Turn right and travel 12km to the park turnoff.

A 14km gravel road leads from Ballandean to the park's eastern boundary, with rough 4WD tracks leading to campsites along the river (7–20km). Bushwalkers can leave vehicles just inside the park.

Care for Sundown

Please help protect Sundown's natural beauty and let others enjoy their visit by:

- leaving all plants and animals undisturbed;
- removing all your rubbish;
- leaving dogs and cats at home;
- not using generators, chainsaws or outboard motors;
- being careful with fire;
- being careful about hygiene. Where there are no toilets, bury human waste well away from creeks and at least 15cm deep; and
- avoiding contaminated areas around old mines.

More information

For campsite bookings, permits and information including weather and river heights contact:

The Ranger
Sundown National Park
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Common brown butterflies