Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary - Wildlife And Wild Country

What Is Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary?

It's a wildlife sanctuary, privately owned and managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). AWC was established to reverse Australia's extremely high rates of flora and fauna extinction.

TYPICAL LANDSCAPE AT MORNINGTON - VAST SAVANNAH PLAINS, WITH KING LEOPOLD RANGE IN THE DISTANCE.

AWC owns and manages over 25 properties across Australia, covering nearly 4 million hectares. Mornington is one of these - a huge property comprising over Â½ million hectares.

A Worn Out Landscape

Mornington's landscape is certainly more arid than land further north. Open savannah country dominates. This land is clearly more arid than the sub-tropical landscape along the Gibb River Road.
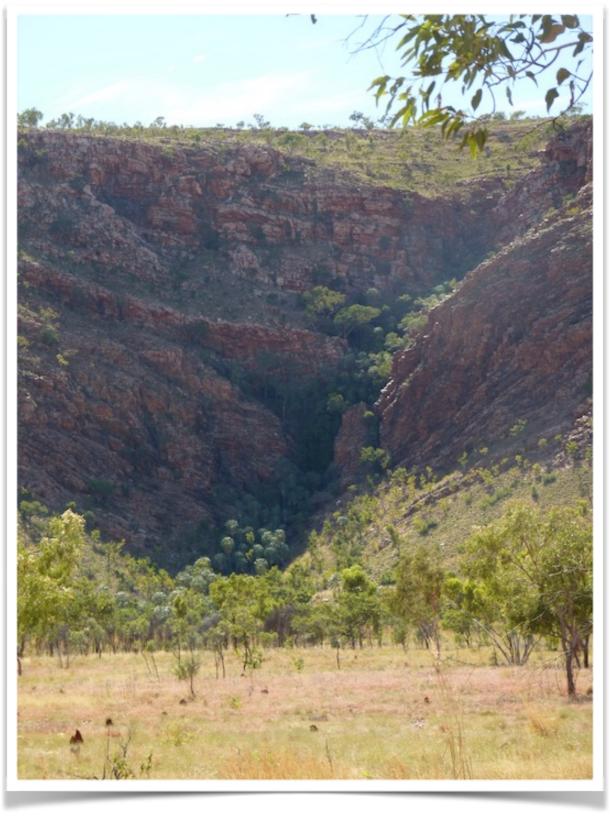

A CLASSIC KIMBERLEYS SCENE - A FRUITING BOAB TREE AGAINST AN ANCIENT ROCKY CLIFF.

You're in the midst of ancient rocky ranges and vast open savannah plains. King Leopold Range is showing its age, hardly surprising since it's around 2 billion years old. It looks old and tired. However there is an unexpected surprise amongst the semi-arid mountains.

Small pockets of tropical rainforest thrive in protected gullies amongst the ranges. About 50 million years ago, this land was covered with tropical rainforest. So it's quite a shock to see majestic Livistonia palms happily growing in such an arid environment - a direct link back to the age of dinosaurs.

THERE'S A SURPRISE IN THAT GULLY YOU CAN SEE IN THE DISTANCE…

REMNANT TROPICAL RAINFOREST!

LIVISTONIA PALMS ARE THRIVING HERE. WE DIDN'T EXPECT THIS!

You can get an appreciation for this landscape by taking a rocky track from Mornington Wilderness Camp to Dimond Gorge and the Fitzroy River. It vaguely follows the base of King Leopold Range and the views are at times simply stunning.

A DINGO TROTTING ALONG THE TRACK TO DIMOND GORGE.

WE CAN STILL SEE YOU…

Dimond Gorge

The Fitzroy River flows through Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary. Over many millions of years the Fitzroy has formed Dimond Gorge. In the 1950s a crazy plan was hatched to dam Dimond Gorge. It was to supply Perth with water, which would be about 2,500km away! Then in 1990 there was another proposal to dam Dimond Gorge - this time to provide irrigation for proposed cotton farms to the south. Thankfully neither came to fruition, as most of Mornington would have been under water.

THE FITZROY RIVER AT DIMOND GORGE.

You can hire canoes at Dimond Gorge or take your own. If you hire, pay your money and grab a paddle before you leave the campground. The canoes are permanently tied up at the gorge. Unfortunately, the day we visited it was just too hot to be cooked alive on the open water. We'll certainly be doing this in the future though.

Take a moment to imagine the 2002 wet season floods. The Fitzroy peaked at 52 metres and spilled over the top of the gorge! That's a huge quantity of water - hard to imagine.

Dimond Gorge is one of those places where you find a shady tree and just chill out as you take in the beauty of the place.

IMAGINE THIS GORGE COMPLETELY FULL IN THE 2002 FLOOD - THAT'S A HUGE VOLUME OF WATER.

Gibb River Road -
Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary

Skimming Stones And Swimming With Freshwater Crocs

Blue Bush is good spot to swim in the Fitzroy River. Another spot is Cadjebut. We had a swim, some lunch, skimmed some stones then had another swim. A good place to chill out. Yes, there are freshwater crocodiles in the river, but they won't worry you.

To be honest, we were a little disappointed with the Fitzroy. Given we were there in May, we all expected to see more water in the river. I suppose it has a lot to do with the sandy soil - the water just doesn't stay on the surface. Must be amazing to see in the Wet though.

SWIMMING AT BLUE BUSH POOL.

CADJEBUT.

SKIMMING STONES AT CADJEBUT. THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF STONES!

YOU'D HAVE TO BE HAPPY WITH THIS VIEW AS YOU DIGEST YOUR LUNCH.

We didn't have time to visit Sir John Gorge, which is further to the east. By all accounts it's a must-see destination. We'll have to go there next time!