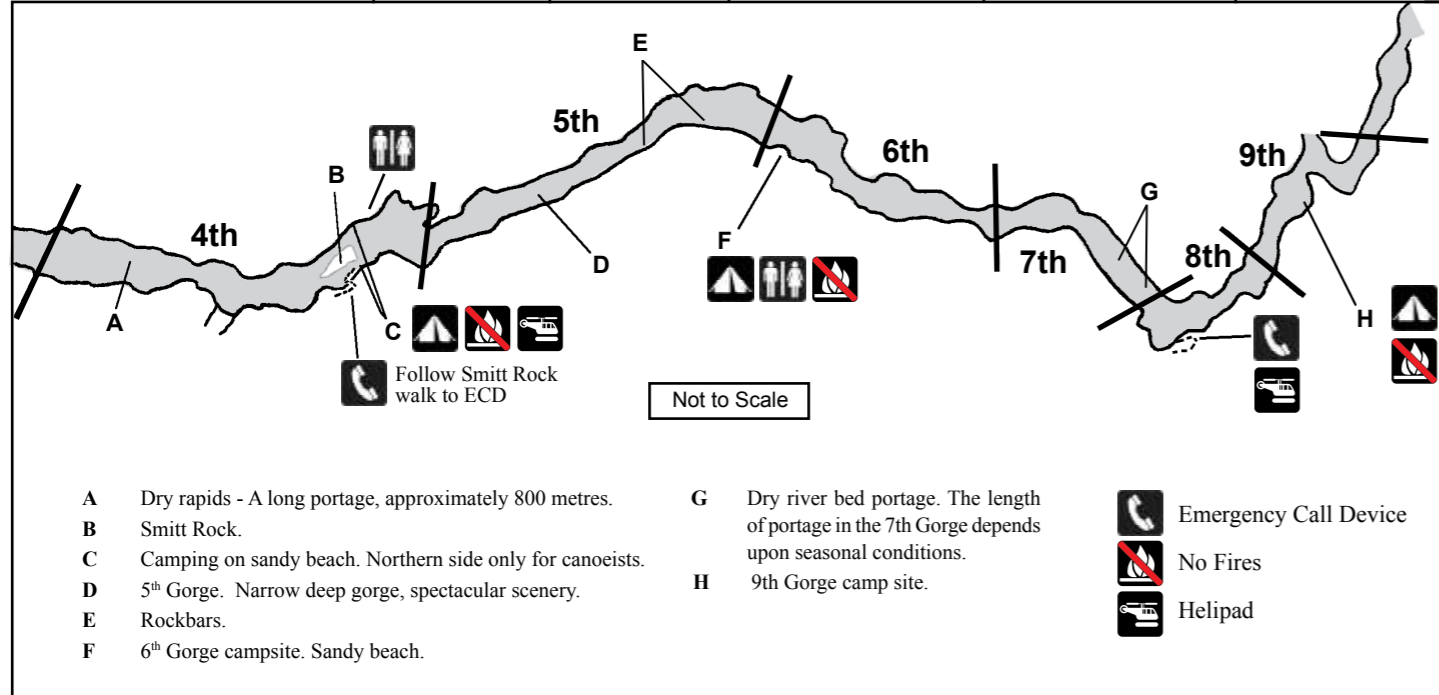


	4th Gorge	5th Gorge	6th Gorge	7th Gorge	8th Gorge	9th Gorge
Length	0.7 km	1.6 km	1.6 km	0.4 km	0.6km	0.8 km
Paddling Time	25 minutes	45 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes	30 minutes
Approximate portage time between Gorges	20 minutes	1st - 10 mins 2nd - 15-20 mins 3rd - 15-20 mins	30 minutes	5 portages Hard work 40 minutes	Hard work 20 minutes	Turn around
Camping	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes



Camping

Permits are required for all canoe camping and are available from the Nitmiluk Centre. Camping is permitted only in the designated areas in the 4th Gorge (Smitt Rock), 6th and 9th Gorges.

- Toilets are provided on the northern side of the river at the 4th Gorge and on the southern side of the river at the 6th Gorge camping areas.
- Camping fees apply.
- All litter/waste must be brought back and taken away with you.
- **NO WOOD FIRES.** However fuel stoves e.g. gas or spirit-burners can be used.

Fishing

If you intend to fish be aware of the following regulations.

- The use of any bait is not permitted within the park. Lures only.
- The minimum legal size for Barramundi is 55cm.
- A daily bag limit of 5 fish and a maximum of 5 in your possession at any time.
- The possession or use of any type of net, trap or spear gun within the Park is an offence.

Barramundi

Lates calcarifer

Barramundi can grow to over 1.5 metres long and 60kg in weight, the Barramundi is one of the largest and best known fresh water fish. Silvery all over in appearance, they have a pointed head with a protruding lower jaw. Nearly all Barramundi are born males, changing sex to become females after about five years.

Sooty Grunter

Hephaestus fuliginosus

Also known as black bream these fish are grey-black or golden-brown all over with dark blotches on the rear body fins. Growing to some 500 mm in length and weighing up to 4kg, they can be found in streams with rocky or sandy bottoms.

Geology

The walls of the Gorge are sedimentary rocks. Layers upon layers of sand were deposited by an ancient sea and slowly compressed into hard sandstone. Movement of the earth's surface fractured the rock, creating many faults crossing at right angles. Water cut into these weak points over millions of years eventually creating the Gorges we see today. The Katherine River is still cutting into the sandstone moving tonnes of sand and rock downstream every year.



Nitmiluk National Park



Canoeing Guide

Canoeing is one of the most enjoyable ways of experiencing Nitmiluk National Park. Paddling beneath the towering walls of the gorge is an unforgettable experience.

For your enjoyment and safety please obey the rules of the waterway and heed the safety warnings in this brochure.

Where to go and how long will it take?

Full Day Hire canoes can travel as far as time permits up through the gorge system. Half Day Hire canoes can reach to the 3rd Gorge.

Canoeing is no longer possible in the 1st Gorge. Enjoy canoeing the 2nd Gorge, you will find this is one of the most photographed parts of the Gorge system.

To canoe past the 5th Gorge it is recommended that you camp overnight. All overnight canoeists are required to obtain a permit from the Parks Desk and will have to carry their canoes over the rocks between gorges.

Very few people travel beyond the 5th Gorge as many rockbars in

the 6th and 7th Gorges make canoe portage difficult. However, an overnight trip to these areas is a rewarding experience away from the crowds.

Nitmiluk Tours Canoe Hire:

Canoeists will be ferried from the Boat Tour departure point to commence canoeing in the 2nd Gorge. A return ferry will leave from the 2nd Gorge.

Half Day users - 8.00am - 12.00pm or 12.30pm - 4.30pm.

Full Day users and Overnight Campers - 8.00am - 4.30 pm.

All canoeists must be back before their allotted times.

A deposit is payable. Failure to observe rules will lead to loss of deposit.

Rules of the Waterway

- Keep to the right hand side.
- Give way to tour boats
- Keep clear of tour boat mooring points.
- Boarding boats is *prohibited*.

Safety - Heat & Sun

It can be extremely hot in the Gorge, especially from October to May. Unprepared canoeists can suffer severe sunburn, heat stress and dehydration. If you are a visitor from

a cooler climate, you will need to be extra cautious, even if you are fit and active.

Follow these rules:

- Avoid dehydration - drink water regularly to replace fluid lost from sweat.
- Avoid sunburn - wear water resistant 30+ sunscreen, and a broad-brimmed hat.
- Wear loose light coloured clothing.

Rockbars, Water Levels and Rapids

The Gorges are separated by rockbars and sometimes rapids. As the water levels rise and fall, the conditions of the rapids change and can become extremely dangerous.

For your Safety

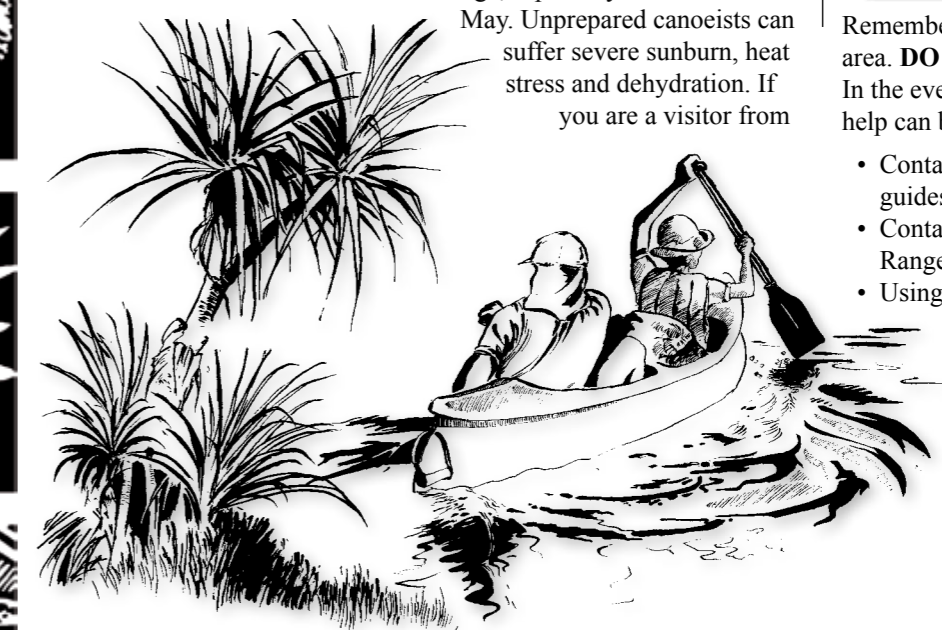
DO NOT attempt to ride the rapids.

Carry canoes around the edge of rapids.

Be aware of slippery rocks. Climbing and diving off rocks and ledges is prohibited.

Remember you are in an isolated area. **DO NOT TAKE RISKS.** In the event of an emergency, help can be sought by:

- Contacting any of the tour guides.
- Contacting patrolling Rangers.
- Using an Emergency Call Device (Locations shown on map).



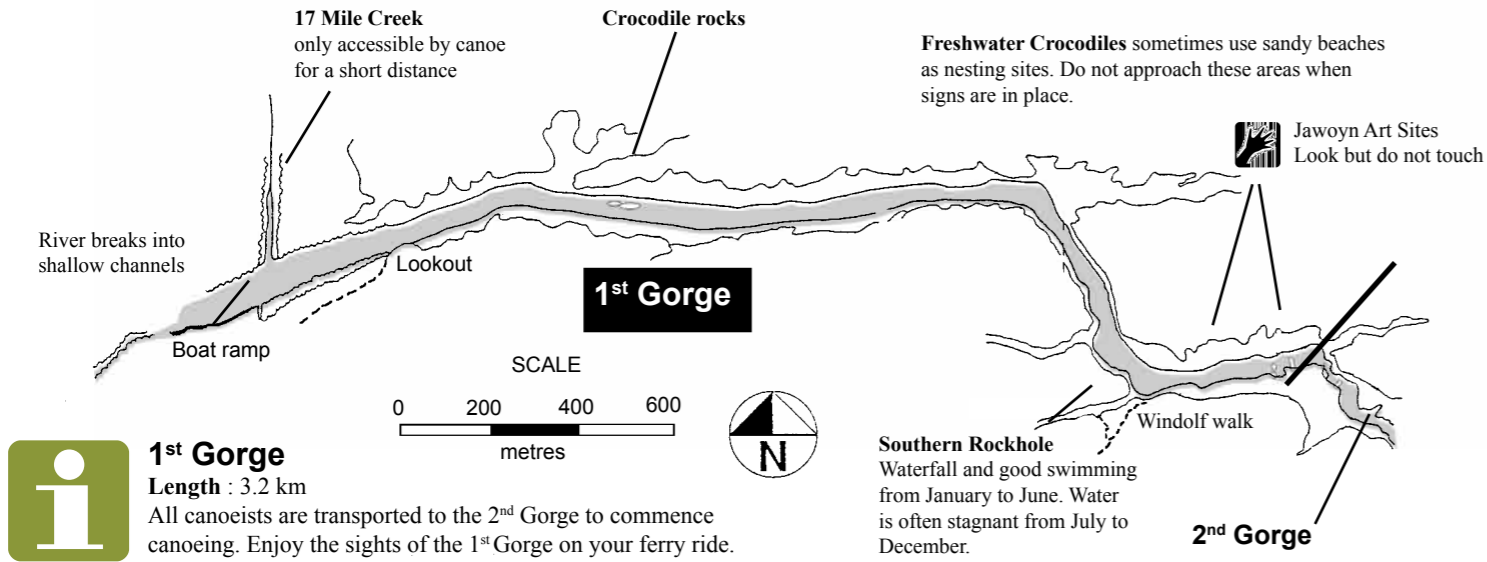
Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Nitmiluk National Park
Ph: (08) 8972 1886

Katherine Regional Office
32 Giles St
PO Box 344, KATHERINE NT 0851
Ph: (08) 8973 8888

www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au
Email: parks.desk@nt.gov.au





Wildlife Observation Hints

To catch a glimpse of the spectacular wildlife in the gorges you must be quiet and patient. Animals seek shelter from the heat in shady places, like the sub gorges. Most wildlife is active early in the morning and late afternoon.
Remember - keep your distance, respect their space and do not feed native wildlife.

Darter

Anhinga melanogaster

The Darter is sometimes referred to as a snake bird because of its slender head and long neck that is often held in an 'S' shape. Darter's swim with their body submerged, diving to seize prey with their dagger-like bills. They can remain under water for up to a minute. Like Cormorants, Darters do not have waterproof plumage and characteristically hold their wings out to dry before taking flight.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Cormorants are very common throughout the Gorge. These birds dive from the surface of the water to feed, grasping prey in their bills and bringing it back to the surface. Little Pied Cormorants can be identified by their dull yellow bills and pale under-parts; Little Black Cormorants are all black.

Crocodiles

Australia has two species, both of which are found in the Top End.

Saltwater Crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* - have been known to enter the Gorge system during the wet season (Oct-May). Extensive surveys for Saltwater Crocodiles are carried out by Rangers prior to the river being opened to canoeing and swimming. Any animals detected are captured and removed.

Freshwater Crocodile *Crocodylus johnstoni*. If you are lucky enough to spot one of these creatures, you should keep your distance, especially near nesting sites. Although they are not considered dangerous to humans, they may bite if provoked or teased.

Freshwater Mangroves

Barringtonia acutangula

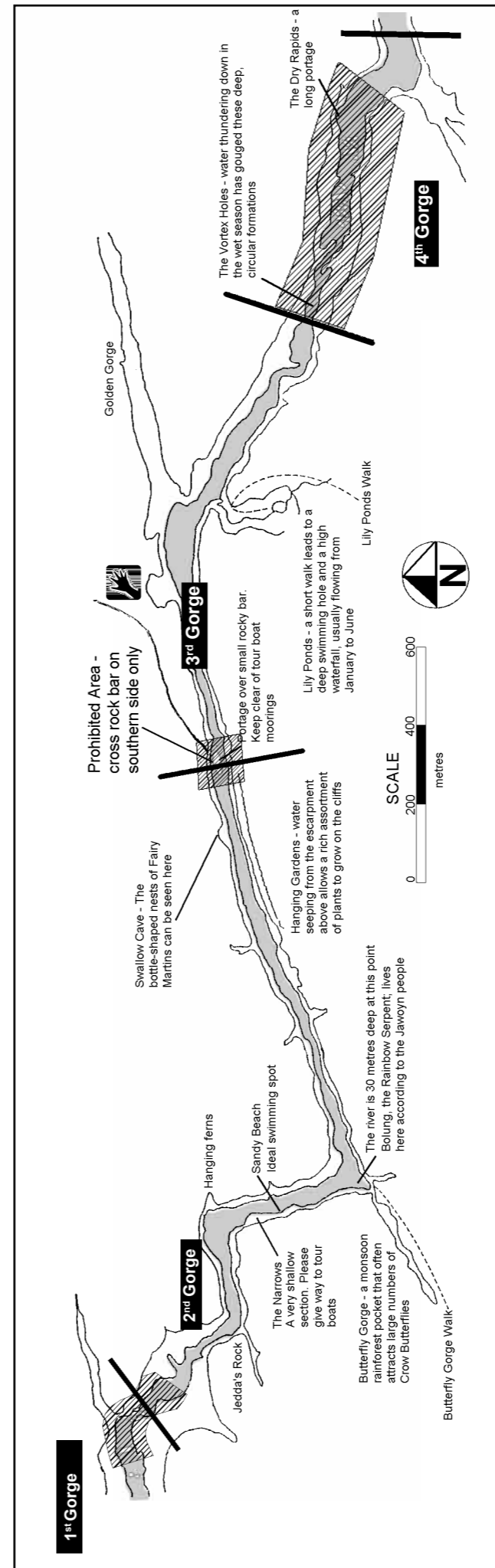
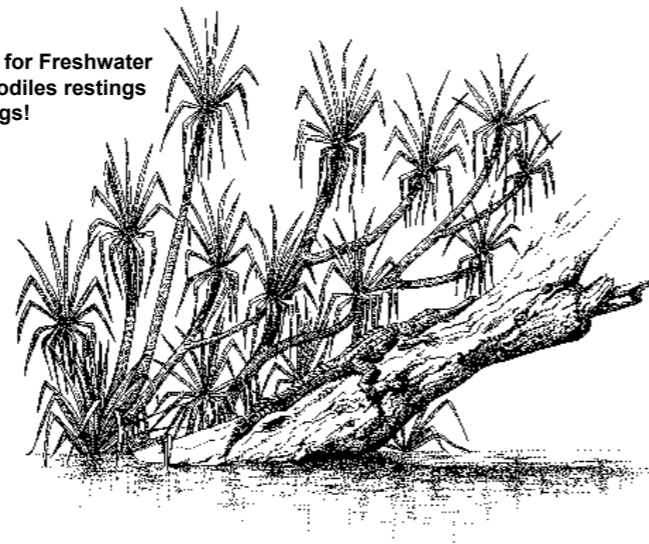
A small deciduous tree which grows to approximately eight metres high. Its features include: Striking red flowers on long stems, it also has unusual four sided fruits. The tree and fruits are regarded as poisonous. When pounded the bark is used as a fish poison by Aboriginal people.

River Pandanus

Pandanus aquaticus

Growing up to four metres high, this distinctive clumping palm has prickly, elongated leaves, 1.2 - 1.8m in length and 3 - 7cm wide. The fruit is green, turning yellow-orange when ripe, globular in shape and 10 - 15cm in diameter. As the name suggests River Pandanus is always associated with fresh water streams and is very common throughout the Gorge. Aboriginal people eat the white inner flesh of the fruit and the leaves are used to make string.

Look for Freshwater Crocodiles restings on logs!



2nd Gorge

Length : 2.4 km
Paddling Time : 50 minutes
Portage time : 2nd to 3rd - 5 mins
No Camping

3rd Gorge

Length : 1 km
Paddling Time : 25 minutes
Portage time : 3rd to 4th - 40 mins
No Camping

Fairy Martin

Hirundo ariel

Fairy Martins look like small swallows and migrate to the gorge every year to breed. They build bottle-shaped mud nests in rock overhangs and caves. Much of their day is spent in flight gathering insects. These birds can be viewed in a rock under cut at the end of the Second Gorge.

Turtles

Northern Snake-necked Turtle

Chelodina rugosa

Northern Short-necked Turtle

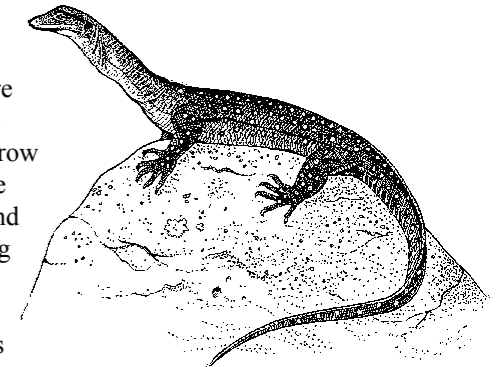
Emydura victoriae

Both of these turtles are present in the Gorge. When extended the head and neck of the Northern Snake-necked Turtle are longer than the rest of the body. The Short Necked Turtle, as the name suggests, has a much shorter neck, and can be identified by the pale salmon coloured strips running along the side of the head. You may see them popping up for a breath or sunning themselves on rock ledges or fallen logs.

Mertens' Water Monitor

Varanus mertensi

This lizard grows up to 1 metre in length and has distinct light cream to yellow spots and narrow cross-band markings. They are extremely strong swimmers and can remain submerged for long periods of time. You often see them sunning themselves on rock ledges close to the waters edge.



White Bush Apple

Syzygium forte ssp. potamophilum

A large tree growing to 30 m high, its bark is papery, flaky and reddish in colour. The dark leathery leaves often have a blueish sheen. They feature snowy white flowers and cream-white apple like fruits. Occurring on banks of permanent freshwater streams they can also be found in monsoon forests. As well as some fish and turtles feeding on the fruit, the white apple when ripe is eaten by Aboriginal people.

Silver-leaved Paperbark

Melaleuca argentea

A tall spreading tree 10 - 20 m high with slender branchlets and silvery-green leaves. Its soft, papery, layered bark is creamy white to grey in colour. Aboriginal people use it for many purposes including; shelters, bedding, rafts and many more. The cream to greenish profusion of flowers are eaten by flying foxes and are visited by native bees for their nectar and pollen.

Dusky Leafnosed-bat

Hipposideros ater

Growing up to 6.5 cm long and weighing up to 11 grams these tiny bats leave their roosts after sunset in search of food. These bats can be recognised by their large rounded ears, they are light grey with a pale underbelly.