

Murray-Sunset National Park Pink Lakes

Visitor Guide

"The Pink Lakes are a pretty sight at most times of the year, changing in colour from a deep pink to a glistening white. They are just as picturesque on bright moon-lit nights as they are in daylight." Jim Kline, a local born and raised at Pink Lakes



Mallee Emu-wren

The prickly clumps of triodia grass, native pine and mallee heathland protected here, provide vital habitat for this small, shy, threatened species.

A rich human history

The existence of "some salt lakes" was first reported in 1851 by a surveyor, Edward White. By this time, large pastoral runs had been taken up in the area, but the hot dry environment and endless, rolling sand dunes hindered permanent settlement.

The beginning of commercial salt mining in 1916 brought families to the shores of the lakes where a small town and school were established. The work was tough on both men and machines and for many years camels provided the most reliable means of transporting the salt.


Salt mining continued until 1979 when the area was declared a State Park.

This 50,700ha State Park was incorporated into Murray-Sunset National Park in 1991, making it Victoria's second largest national park (633,000ha).


Why are the lakes pink?


The pink colour of the lakes is due to the red pigment beta-carotene (the colour in carrots), secreted by the alga *Dunaliella salina*. During winter, highly saline (salt) ground water seeps down from the surrounding country into the lakes. The water evaporates during the intense heat of summer leaving shimmering salt beds.


Enjoying the park


 **Walking** - The area offers excellent opportunities for walking (excluding summer). Some suggested walks are the Kline Nature Walk (approx 2 hours), Lake Becking (approx 45 mins) and Lake Hardy (approx 1 hour).

It is essential to contact a Ranger before attempting an extended walk in the more remote areas of the park.

 **Cycling** - Pioneer Drive offers good cycling. Other tracks are too sandy.

 **Photography** - The Pink Lakes are outstanding subjects for photography, the colour is most intense on overcast days. Spring wildflowers and extensive birdlife offer endless opportunities.

 **Driving** - For those with limited time to spend in the park a drive around Pioneer Drive is recommended. There are many interesting features along the way as you pass through a variety of plant communities.

 **Camping** - The main campground at Lake Crosbie is a great spot for an overnight or longer stay. Camping facilities are also provided at Mt Crozier (4WD) and Mopoke Hut (4WD).

Day visits - Facilities including toilets, fireplaces and picnic tables are available at Lake Crosbie and Lake Becking.

Drinking water is not available in the park and visitors are advised to bring their own. General supplies and accommodation are available at Underbool and Walpeup.



WARNING! During dry, hot weather feral bees may be present and persistent around any source of moisture, eg. drinking/washing water, food, perspiration.

Be prepared for discomfort and bee stings!

How to get there

The Pink Lakes are 70km west of Ouyen, along the Mallee Highway. An all-weather gravel road gives access to the main camping areas, but access further north into the park is recommended for 4WD only.



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For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call **13 1963**
or visit the website
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Alfred Deakin Centre
180 - 190 Deakin Avenue
Mildura Vic 3500
(03) 50188380
email:
tourism@mildura.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your parks by following these guidelines:

Camp only in designated areas

Please take rubbish home with you for recycling and disposal

All plants, animals, archaeological sites and geographic features are protected by law and must not be disturbed or removed

Dogs and other pets are not permitted in the park

Firearms, generators and chainsaws are prohibited

Fires may only be lit in fireplaces provided

No fires (including gas or fuel stoves in tents) may be lit on days of **Total Fire Ban**. Pink Lakes is in the **North Western Total Fire Ban District**

Reduce trampling by keeping to the walking tracks

Vehicles, including motor cycles, must not be driven off open formed roads. All vehicles must be registered and drivers licensed

Mobile Phones:

You may not be in network range in some areas of the park. To be connected to Police, Ambulance or CFA, **key in 112 then press the YES key**

Local Residents - plants & animals

There are about 600 known species of plants native to the park. The vegetation around the Pink Lakes consists of highly specialised salt-tolerant plant communities with Mallee woodland further up the slope and, on the more fertile areas, pine-buloke woodland.

Spring is the best time to see wildflowers such as Spider orchids, Azure Sun-orchids, Desert Baekia and the Poached-egg Daisy.

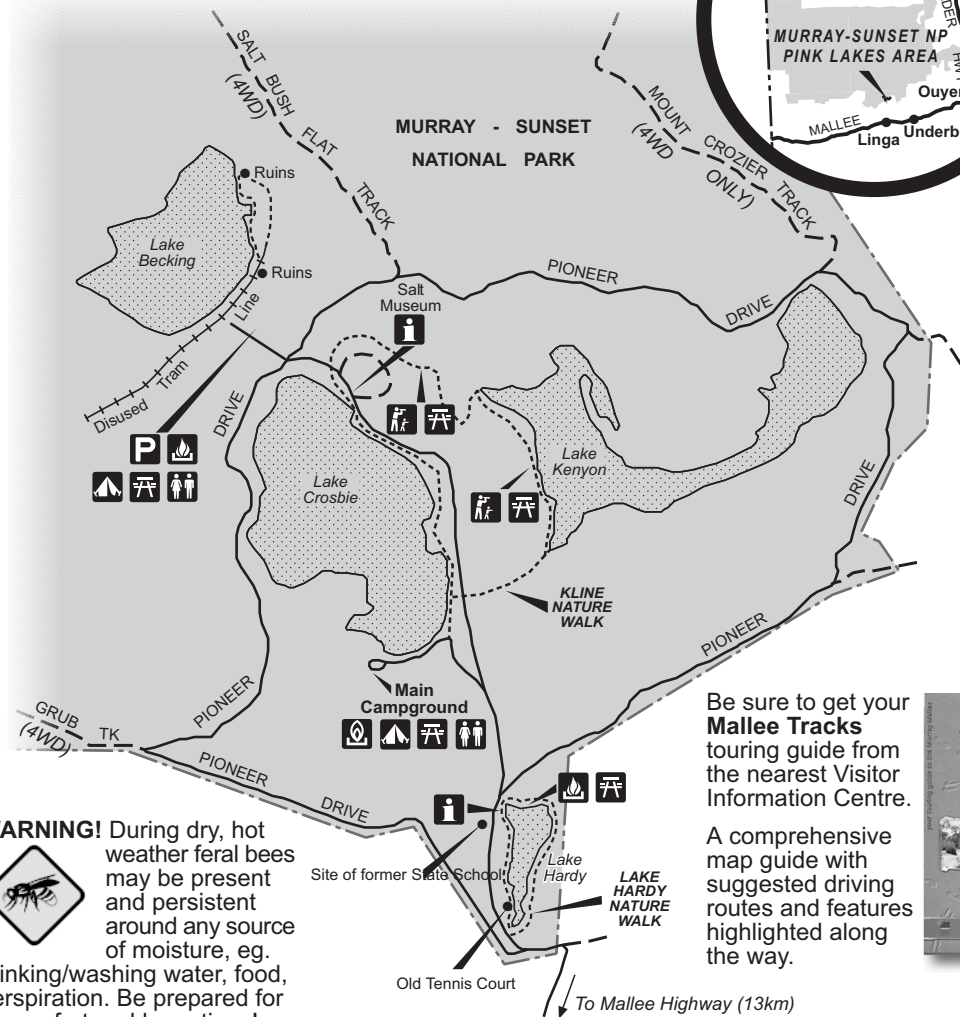
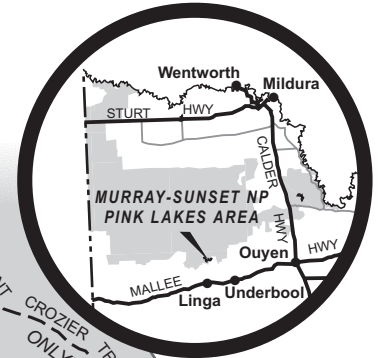
Emus and Western Grey Kangaroos can be seen grazing in the surrounding woodlands at dawn and dusk. Walkers may catch a glimpse of the shy Echidna, and on a warm day, the Bearded Dragon basking in the sun.

The Pink Lakes abound with birdlife, including Red-rumped Parrots, Mallee Ringnecks, Pink Cockatoos, Spotted Pardalotes, White-fronted Chats, and Mallee Emu-wrens.



Mallee Emu-wren

The prickly clumps of *tridida* grass, native pine and mallee heathland protected here, provide vital habitat for this small, shy, threatened species.



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Be sure to get your **Mallee Tracks** touring guide from the nearest Visitor Information Centre.

A comprehensive map guide with suggested driving routes and features highlighted along the way.



Pink Lakes Area		Murray-Sunset National Park		Recreational Facilities	
	Unsealed road		Barbecue - Gas		Lookout
	Vehicular track		Camping		Park information
	Walking track		Carpark		Picnic table
	Salt lake		Fireplace		Toilets

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Cartography by Spatial Vision 2007 M/6454

Drinking Water
Be self-sufficient and carry water in, and/or know how to make untreated water safe for drinking.