

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES -BUSHWALKING, CYCLING AND BIRD-WATCHING

Wide, well-maintained tracks, noticeable seasonal changes in the landscape and a large and varied bird population (around 150 species) entice visitors to return to Mulligans Flat and Gorooyarroo Reserves. Bushwalking and cycling on approved management trails are ideal ways to explore the area. Maps of the walks listed below are available from the Mitchell Depot of the The ACT Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) ph: 6207 2113

Mulligans Circuit

12km return (3hrs moderate walking)
Meandering through forest, woodland and grassy glades, this circuit provides an excellent overview of Mulligans Flat.

Mulligans Birdwalk

6km return (2hrs easy walking) Walk through yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland with patches of forest on the ridge-tops. Fallen timber provides important habitat

for woodland birds such as the Brown Tree Creeper. At the dams, Wood Ducks and other water birds may be seen.

North Mulligans Circuit

5.5km return (2hrs moderate walking)

This circuit provides sweeping views over Gungahlin and into NSW. Kangaroo Grass dominates the lower slopes while steep slopes support Red Stringybark Open Forest.

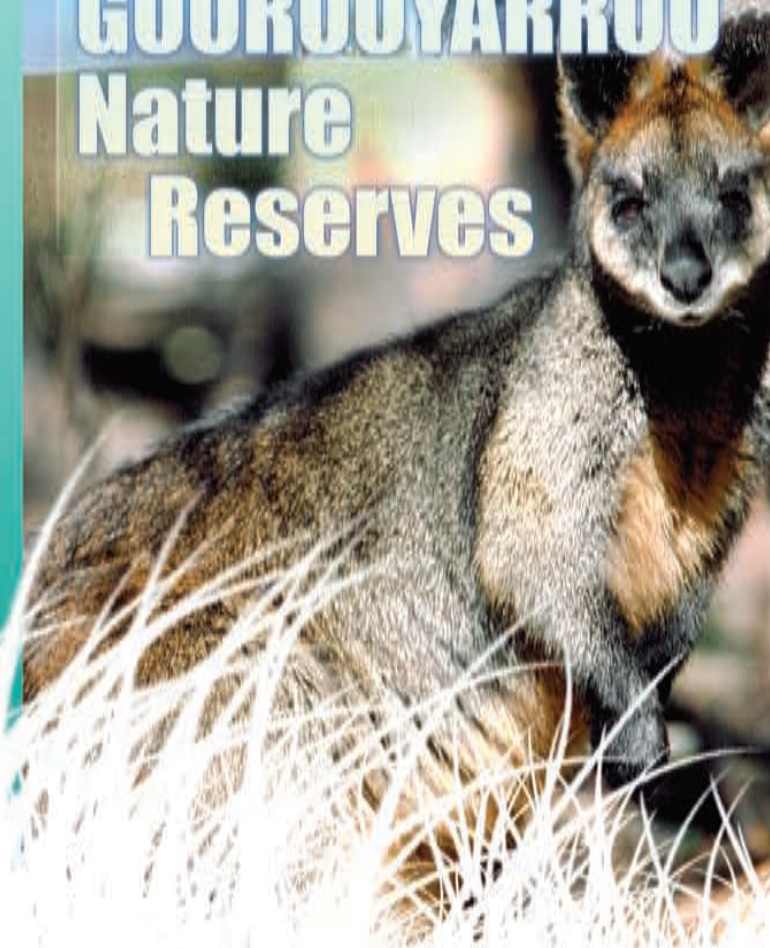
Gorooyarroo Track

11km return (2.5hrs moderate walking)

Passing through Yellow Box- Red Gum Grassy Woodland, this track also enables access to many side tracks including: The Dams Valley (1km return) Old Joe Hill (1.2km return) Dunnarts Flat via McKeahnie's Track (2km return) Goro Hill (1.2km return)

The Gorooyarroo Track ends at the Mulligans Flat Boundary. Return the way you came. Cycling the formed road and walking the side trips is a good way to explore.

MULLIGANS FLAT and GOOROYARROO Nature Reserves



Australian Government



FROGWATCH
ACT and Region



HISTORY OF THE AREA - *COUNTRY OF THE NGUNNAWAL*

This area is a rich cultural landscape scattered with evidence of the presence of Aboriginal people and European settlers. Goorooyarroo is the name given by the Ngunnawal people to the land stretching from the west of Lake George, through Gungahlin and behind Mt Ainslie.

Aboriginal people gathered seeds, fruits, tubers and also hunted animals here. Fire was used to flush animals into the open and encourage them back to eat the new growth. Campsites, stone tools (artefacts), grinding grooves and quarries are evidence of a long tradition of Aboriginal association with the area.

Aboriginal people obtained rock from outcrops in Mulligans Flat and made tools on site. Axes were made and sharpened by rubbing a roughly-shaped, igneous “blank” on bedrock, leaving broad, flat grooves in the rock.

When European settlement began in the area in the 1820's, the Ngunnawal people assisted the early settlers and some accepted employment with them. The number of Aboriginal people declined rapidly after white settlement and although some links to the land were broken, this area is still important to the local Ngunnawal people today. Lyell L. Gillespie's book 'Ginninderra', describes this area during the 1800's. Some of the best, early crops of wheat came from near Mulligans Flat. It also had a good reputation for wool production. This wealth came from grazing the woodlands and grasslands. Some Aboriginal names in the area; Ginninderra (derived from Ginin-ginin-derry the Aboriginal name for the creek that flows through the district) – sparkling or throwing out little rays of light. Gungahlin or Goongarline – White man's house.



DIFFERENT HABITATS OF MULLIGANS FLAT AND GOOROoyARROO NATURE RESERVES

The Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves protects three different habitats: Forest, Lowland Woodland and Grasslands.

Forest

The ridges support areas of forest where Scribbly Gums, Red Stringybarks, Bundy and Brittle Gums grow close together. Swamp Wallabies, Sugar Gliders and Brush tailed Possums find food and shelter here.

Woodlands

Lowland woodlands occur below 750m on the deeper soils of hill slopes. Woodlands have wider spaced trees and a more grassy understorey than a forest. The endangered, Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland that grows here provides food, shelter and nest sites for a host of birds including Honey Eaters.

Grasslands

Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo have some natural, grassy glades. However most of the treeless areas were created by early farmers who cleared woodland to form “secondary” grassland communities containing native tussock grasses interspersed with wildflowers. Over time these secondary grassland communities will most likely return to woodland.



WHY PROTECT OUR LOWLAND WOODLANDS?

Lowland woodlands and grasslands once stretched from southern Queensland to Adelaide and included the ACT. These grassy ecosystems were prized by farmers and graziers because of their good soils and open structure. Only fragments survive today. Canberra itself was built where woodlands were common. Mulligans Flat and Gorooyaroo protect



one of the largest stands and some of the best examples of Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland; an endangered ecological community, in Australia. Some threatened species of Mulligans Flat and Gorooyaroo include

the Brown Treecreeper and the Hooded Robin. Over 600 different types of native plants and animals have been found in lowland woodlands and grasslands in the southern tablelands of NSW and the ACT making them an extremely diverse ecosystem.

Vegetation Structure

One of the reasons for this diversity is the complex structure of vegetation which in turn provides food and shelter for a host of species. Layers of vegetation, trees of different ages, hollows, fallen timber, rocks and water are part of the complexity. Much of the wildlife is shy, nocturnal or difficult to see, but it is there.

Tree Canopy

Flowers on large, old eucalypts provide nectar and pollen for animals such as Honey Eaters and Sugar Gliders. Flowering also attracts insects that are fed on by canopy-feeding birds. A native species of the tree parasite, mistletoe, is eaten by many bird species, including the mistletoe bird. Seeds are spread via its droppings. Mistletoe foliage is eaten by Brush-tailed Possums which helps control the spread of this native parasite of trees. Tree hollows are used as dens, roosts or nests by birds, bats, parrots and arboreal mammals (such as Sugar Gliders). A woodland must have eucalypts of all ages to provide a continuing supply of hollows. These can take from 70 to more than 200 years to form.

Mid layer

Wrens, robins, thornbills and honeyeaters move through the mid layer of Silver Wattle, Australian Blackthorn and regenerating Eucalypts looking for insects. The Hooded Robin needs a complex vegetation structure to survive. It nests in saplings but hunts insects in open grassy woodland glades. Beneath the bark of mid layer species, live insects and spiders that are in turn eaten by frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals. Ringtail Possums and many native birds make their nests from bark.

Ground Layer

Bark, Leaf litter, fallen timber, rocks and tussock grasses provide cover for reptiles, small mammals and invertebrates. Insects and other invertebrates make up more than 90% of the biodiversity in woodlands and are vital for pollination and recycling of nutrients. Fallen logs and branches provide homes for reptiles and critical foraging habitat for the threatened Brown Treecreeper. Mosses, lichens and liverworts decorate dead timber, rocks and soil, forming a living crust which maintains soil productivity and helps prevent erosion.



HOW CAN YOU HELP PROTECT MULLIGANS FLAT AND GOOROYARROO RESERVES?

Invasive weeds, feral animals and uncontrolled domestic animals (dogs and cats) are major threats to the continued survival of biodiversity in the Mulligans Flat and Gorooyaroo Reserves. Other threats include illegal entry of cars and motorbikes, removal of timber and rocks and the lighting of fires. The current development of new suburbs very close to the boundaries of the park will increase these threats. If you are a regular visitor or live close to the park you can help protect the area by;

- Reporting fires (Contact 000).
- Reporting illegal entry of cars, motorbikes, dogs, the lighting of fires.
- Reporting illegal removal of timber or rocks.
- Reporting the dumping of garden rubbish and prunings.
- Ensuring your own gardens are free of invasive weeds.
- Ensuring your cats and dogs do not enter the reserve.

To report fires or any illegal activities call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 or in case of emergency 000.

For other information contact the Ginninderra Catchment Group on 62783309.

