

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve



Fact Sheet

The Rainbow Valley area features scenic sandstone bluffs and cliffs. These free standing cliffs form part of the James Range, and are particularly stunning in the early morning and late afternoon when the rainbow-like rock bands are highlighted.

The coloured rock bands in the sandstone cliffs were caused by water. In earlier, wetter times the red iron of the sandstone layers were dissolved and drawn to the surface during the dry season. The red minerals formed a dark, iron rich surface layer with the leached white layers below.

This dark red capping is hard, and weathers slowly, whereas the softer white sandstone below weathers quickly into loose sand.

Weathering and erosion have also produced the valley shape, where sandstone blocks have eroded into rock faces and squared towers.

Access

The turn-off to the Reserve is 75 kilometres south of Alice Springs along the Stuart Highway. From here it is a 22 kilometre stretch east, along an unsealed road which has some sandy patches. For this reason access is recommended for 4WD only.

When to visit

The Reserve is accessible all year-round, the cooler months from April to September being the most pleasant.

What to do



Camping - is permitted in the designated camping area only. Facilities include gas and wood barbecues, picnic tables and a pit toilet. Camping fees are payable on site.



Walking - There is a marked walking trail which takes you to Mushroom Rock. Mushroom Rock is an interesting sandstone formation with many Fairy Martin nests attached to the upper walls.

The sandstone ridges and bluffs provide opportunities for spectacular photographs, particularly around dawn or dusk, or when the claypans adjacent to the bluffs are holding water.

Safety and Comfort

- Observe park safety signs.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Wear a shady hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, suitable clothing and footwear.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
- Consider your health and fitness when choosing a walk.

Please Remember

- Keep to designated roads and tracks.
- All historic, cultural items and wildlife are protected.
- Firewood collection is not permitted in the reserve.
- Fires are only permitted in designated firepits.
- Bins are not provided, please take your rubbish with you.
- Pets are not permitted in this reserve.
- Generators are not permitted.

With their varied shapes and colours, the sandstone ridges and bluffs of Rainbow Valley are a favourite with photographers.



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