

Carr Boyd Explorer: May 16-29, 2010

Located south of Kununurra and west of Lake Argyle, the peaks and cliffs of the Carr Boyds will be familiar to anyone who has visited the region. From the roads they present a forbidding face, dry and barren, rugged beyond belief. Up close they show a different nature. Local bushwalkers love the range for the numerous deep cool gorges, lovely waterfalls and beautiful fern lined pools, just waiting for someone to stop and have a swim.

Section 1: Southern Carr Boyds: May 16-22

We begin with bus to Lake Argyle and a boat trip across the lake to Revolver Creek. Exactly where we get dropped off will depend on the level of the lake at the time. We spend the next few days working our way up a gorge and then to the top of a spectacular waterfall on one of Revolver Creek's main tributaries. A long day's walk from the top of the falls brings us to the headwaters of another creek and the beginning of an even more spectacular gorge. We follow this down to the narrow gap where it exits the southern range, floating our packs on several occasions. We camp at the end of the gap where we are met by the helicopter which brings in the food drop and those joining us for section two. Those finishing here take the helicopter back to Kununurra.

Notes on section 1.

Despite our previous walks in the area, this remains an exploratory walk where we can only hint at what we may find. It requires good fitness and a sense of adventure.

The depth of Lake Argyle is subject to great variation. The boundary of Lake Argyle shown on the map may bear little resemblance to the boundary at the time you visit.

The longest mandatory pack float should be no more than 30-40 m. However, water levels can vary dramatically from year to year. The pool in the gap where the creek exits the southern range has varied from just over 100 m to about 300 m. This is by far the longest swim and can be avoided with a not-too-difficult climb.

There is an option of a scenic helicopter flight back over where we've been when the food drop comes in.

Maps. 1:50 000 Cooe Creek & Carlton Gorge or 1:100 000 Argyle Downs & Kununurra.

Section 2: Northern Carr Boyds: May 22-29

We spend our first full day walking across the broad valley which separates the northern and southern Carr Boyd Ranges. This brings us to a patch of dense forest and the first of many waterfalls. (One creek has seven waterfalls over a distance of about 3-4 km. Another has a lovely set of cascades dropping into a beautiful, lily-filled pool. There are many more.)

We spend the rest of the week slowly working our way north, swimming in the many beautiful pools as we explore a few of the many spring fed creeks which dot the range. About lunch time on the final day we are met by the 4WD vehicle which brings us back to Kununurra.

Maps. 1:50 000 Carlton Gorge & Deception Range or 1:100 000 Kununurra.

Terrain and Difficulty - Both sections

Climate Level 3. Generally dry, average daytime max low 30's, average night minimum 14-18°, but can get below 5°C on occasion.

Terrain	<p>South, level 3. This section includes several steep but relatively short climbs. There is a substantial amount of rock hopping and some areas are likely to be fairly scrubby. There are a number of fairly short, compulsory swims. Non-swimmers can float the pools on an airbed. Although much of the terrain is more rugged than most of the areas through which we walk, we have allocated extra time so that there should still be ample time to relax and enjoy the pools we find along the way.</p> <p>North, level 3. The climbs on this section should not be as long and as steep as on the first section. Although there is a substantial amount of rock hopping, it should be easier than the first section. We have allocated enough time so that most groups should be able to do one or more half day walks without carrying a full pack.</p>
Vegetation	Level 2-4, average 3. Varies dramatically from year to year depending on when last burnt. If recently burnt, it's easier than the description here. Some of the walking will be fairly open and some will be through thick grasses including spinifex, gaiters essential, long trousers recommended. General grade 3.
Hours	You generally walk 4-6 hours per day
Packs	<p>Waterproofing. Essential that you bring one or two strong garbage bags or something else you can use to keep your pack dry during the pack floats on the southern section. Not needed on the northern section.</p> <p>Pack weight - level 3 on both sections. Carry food for a week.</p>
Art	No sites found in southern range to date. A few minor sites in north. Few routes see more than one, some see none.
Campsites	Mix of sand, rock ledges and grassy areas. Excellent high views from near at least one site in the southern section. Some sites are excellent, but on average, not as outstanding as on some of our other trips.
Swims	Very good most years, not as good in very dry years.
Lowlights	Some campsites a bit cramped. Pushing through thick grass on occasion.
Highlights	<p>South: incredible gorge scenery, floating packs through gorges few people ever visit.</p> <p>North: waterfalls, gorges, walking without full packs some of the time.</p>
Wildlife	<p>South: Boat trip across Lake Argyle often allows you to see more wallabies than on most of the walks we do.</p> <p>North: birds everywhere but you are unlikely to see many large animals.</p>
Fishing	<p>South. A couple of good spots at beginning and end, little or none in the middle.</p> <p>North. As with the south, fishing is possible only at the beginning or very end.</p>

Notes for both sections

Day packs may be useful on both sections.

Gaiters or long pants and seed socks are essential. You won't need them all the time, but they will make your life much more pleasant on the scrubby sections.

Those doing both sections should have a parcel with the things they need for the food drop for section two ready to give to the guide at the pre-trip meeting the night before departure. In addition, we can arrange for fresh items to be purchased just prior to the food drop and brought in for those who want them.

Bringing fresh fruit, vegetables or honey into WA is illegal whether you come by road or plane. (You cannot even bring in boxes or other containers that once contained fruit or vegetables.) Bags are checked both on the highway and at the airport. There will be time to do some shopping in Kununurra.

Itinerary: Carr Boyd Explorer

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change.

Section 1 Southern Carr Boyds

Day 0 Travel to Kununurra. There are daily air and bus services between Kununurra and Perth and Darwin. Connections to the eastern states are normally made through Darwin.

Pre-trip meeting for everyone doing the first section, 6.30 p.m., outdoor area, Kimberley Croc Backpackers. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance. If the flight schedule is changed so that those arriving that day cannot get to the meeting on time, we will delay the start of the meeting until the plane is in.

Day 1 6.30 or 7 a.m. (approximate time — the exact time will be fixed at the pre-trip meeting) pick up from your accommodation in Kununurra provided you have given us the address at least a week before departure or have made other arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. If you are unable to notify us where you are staying, the pick up is from in front of the Kununurra Visitors Centre.
Bus to Lake Argyle. Boat to the beginning of the walk.
Begin walk carrying full packs. Bush camp.

Day 2-6 Walking through the range carrying full packs every day. Possible side trip(s) without full packs. Bush camping.

Day 7 Walk to exit gap. Swim through short gorge. Helicopter food drop (probably in the afternoon). Bush camp at food drop site. Those finishing here fly back to Kununurra.

Section 2 Northern Carr Boyds

Day 7 Those joining for this section fly in from Kununurra. Bush camp at food drop site.

Day 8 Carry packs and walk across central valley to creek & campsite on southern edge of northern range. Bush camp.

Day 9-13 Walking through the range carrying full packs most days. Possible side trip(s) without full packs. Bush camping.

Day 14 Walk out to meet the pick up vehicle. Return to Kununurra. Drop off at your accommodation.

Important Note **Air North**, the main airline operating into Kununurra uses relatively small aircraft and has a baggage allowance of only 13 kg on some flights. Unless special arrangements have been made, if you are flying to Kununurra and your baggage weighs more than 13 kg, it may not get on the plane with you. (This would be very unusual but it is possible.) Contact Air North for more details. Phone: 1800 627474 or (08) 8920 4000; Fax: (08) 8920 4095; email: airnorth@regionallink.com.au
Skywest began flying between Kununurra and Broome or Darwin in April 2009. Call 1300 660088 for flight dates and times or see www.skywest.com.au