

Draft Notes: King George Area: May 7-20, 2017

Section 1: Faraway Bay airstrip to Twin Falls: May 7-14

We fly to the Faraway Bay airstrip where we leave the food for the second section, don our packs and head toward an area with a number of interesting Aboriginal art sites and middens as well as some wonderful sea views. We spend the afternoon exploring without packs.



Sea view near first camp.



Sunset, Monitor Falls, camp 2

The following day, we move a short distance to a small waterfall which plunges into the sea below. (If water is a problem, we'll have to head here on the first day.) Again there are a number of interesting art sites and a good walk without packs in the afternoon. Sitting at the top of the cliffs looking down the bay at sunset is truly magnificent.



Bradshaw or Gwion figures near camp 2.

We spend the next two or three days working our way to a major north-south creek. The terrain is a mix of flat and easy plus some very broken rocky country. We have never managed to take the same route twice. Back in the early 1990s before we had a GPS, one group found a major art site which we have never seen since. In 2012, we had a really good look in the area where we thought it should have been. It wasn't there. Now that we have ruled out most of the possibilities, we have a good idea where the site may be. It's a little bit out of the way, but, it's close to a larger creek than the one we camped on in 2012, so, if the group is interested, we'll have another go at finding it.

Once we arrive at the north-south creek, nameless on the map, we'll spend a full two days working our way down past the many huge pools to where it plunges over a tall waterfall into Glycosmis Bay below. A couple of hundred metres away, a second creek plunges over a second waterfall, hence the name Twin Falls.



Twin Falls panorama. We camp between the two falls. There is good swimming above the falls on the main branch.

If we get here in time to spend two nights, we'll have the choice of doing an interesting walk down to a beach below or a drier walk to an area which we have been told contains a good concentration of Aboriginal art sites. Either walk takes most of the day.

On the final day of this section, we make our way down the east side and out to another small beach where we meet the float plane that brings in our food for the second section and takes us to Koolama Bay or somewhere nearby. The first part of the walk is flat and easy, the final descent is steep and potentially scrubby. Gardening gloves can be useful as can secateurs.



The final descent.

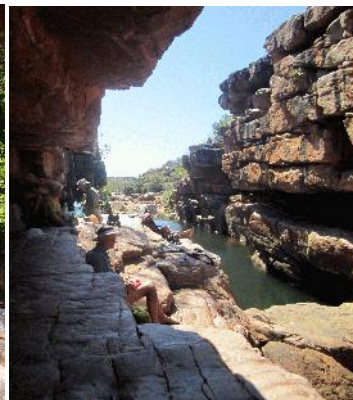
Section 2: Koolama Bay to Faraway Bay airstrip: May 14-20

The float plane brings in anyone joining this section and will drop off anyone leaving at the end. The float plane cannot drop us off at King George Falls where we used to get dropped off by boat. We have discussed possible landing sites with the aircraft charter company and believe that we have come up with the best route. This, will, however, be the first time we have used it so it will be somewhat exploratory.

We plan to get dropped off at Koolama Bay, hopefully at the base of Koolama Gorge, named for a boat attacked and badly damaged by Japanese aircraft in February 1942. If we get dropped off at the base of the gorge, we can go down to the beach and follow a marked heritage trail where signs explain what happened. You can also read about it on the Wikipedia Koolama page, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koolama>. If we get dropped off on the beach, we'll have to do that part of the walk with full packs.



Lower Koolama Gorge.



Having a break upper Koolama, just below camp.



From here we head east, aiming to camp on another lovely creek which we follow down to where it drops over a waterfall into the sea below. The photo at right was taken from the top of the waterfall and shows why we do all our swimming up high. The croc in the photo is well over three metres long.

Depending on the time we arrive, we might go down to a big beach below (not shown in the photo), camp near the top of the falls, or move upstream to decrease the length of the next day's walk to the top of King George Falls.

King George Falls is a double fall at the head of an 8 km long gorge. If we have time, we will spend two nights here and spend a full day exploring the gorge near the falls.

The following day, we hike upstream along the King George River, stopping to visit a number of Aboriginal art sites.



From here, we trek into the [Enjoying a pre-dinner drink, looking down King George Gorge.](#)

unknown. We know where we are going, but this will be a new route. The map shows it as mostly flat as we head west to another unnamed creek where our final camp is above a fairly tall waterfall which plunges into a gorge below. Depending on water levels, we may choose to camp with the views at the falls or at a large pool about 200 m upstream.

From here, it is only about 5 km to the Faraway Bay airstrip and the aircraft which will bring us back to Kununurra.



Walk over, the 2012 group prepares to board the aircraft for the flight to Kununurra.

Notes

Although we will be averaging less than ten kilometres per day, some of the areas through which we will be travelling are quite rugged. This, combined with the need to carry up to a weeks worth of food, makes reasonable physical fitness absolutely essential.

The trip includes a lot of rock hopping with a full pack on and even a bit of clambering over large boulders. Anyone who has done some off-trail rock hopping is unlikely to have any problem with the terrain. However, we strongly recommend that anyone who has never done any off-trail rock hopping find some place where they can try it and see how well they cope. Most people cope reasonably well right from the start. A few have serious difficulties which are impossible to overcome quickly.

As the trip should include a number of day-walks, you should bring a day pack or bum bag.

The food drop will be organised at the pre-trip meeting the day before the trip starts. Come prepared with a separate package containing your breakfasts and lunches for section two.

Although we carry a sat phone and a PLB, you need to be aware that no satellite phone is 100% reliable. If an accident occurs at a time when we cannot get through, the PLB might not get help for a day or more.

We expect warm to hot conditions, possibly quite humid at times, with relatively little rain for most of the trip. **However, the weather can do odd things.** In 2004, a huge storm system stranded us at Faraway Bay for two days after the trip was supposed to end in late May.

If you like fishing, bring a light weight fishing line. It can be excellent in several of the places we visit.

The photos in these notes were all taken on a special trip we made to the area in June 2012.

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. All flights arrive in time for you to do some shopping in Kununurra.

Terrain and difficulty

Overall Level 3.

Climate Level 4. Rain is unlikely but possible. Could be somewhat humid. Average daytime max about 34° C; average night minimum 18-20° C, but can get below 10° C on occasion.

Terrain Level 3. Some flat, some steep, some rock hopping. A complete mix. Some of the harder terrain may be done with day packs. **How hard it is depends partly on how much you want to do.**



It was 8°C on the morning this photo was taken. It may not get that cold, but it could even get slightly cooler.



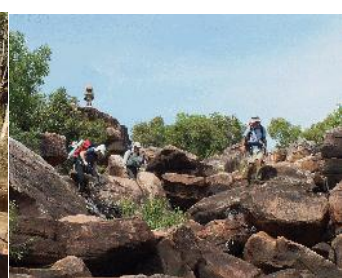
As easy as it gets.



Easy walking along a creek.



Scrubby walking and creek crossing.



and Serious rock hopping. A bit of this is unavoidable.

Vegetation Level 3. Can vary from year to year depending on when last burnt.

Most of the walking will be fairly open but there may be some thick grasses including spinifex. There will be one or more short sections of thick vine forest. Gaiters or long trousers and seed socks strongly recommended. We normally see a large variety of wildflowers.



Unknown flower.



Poor soils mean sundews like this are common.



Calandrina – several species occur in the region.



Grevillea refracta – one of the many grevilleas we see.

Hours Generally 4-6 hours walking per day.

Packs **Waterproofing.** Although rain is unlikely, we recommend bringing a pack cover liner (which could be as little as a heavy duty garbage bag) in case we get a late season storm.

Pack weight - level 3. You carry a week's food on each section

Art There is a wealth of art sites in the area. Many are quite faded, but some are in excellent condition. More Bradshaws than Wandjinnas but both are there.



Campsites Mix of sand, rock ledges and grassy areas. Some sites are excellent, some less so.

Photographing a Bradshaw or Gwion site. We always make sure that no one touches the paintings.

Swims Good to excellent along most of the route. There are likely to be one or two camp sites where swimming is limited.



Swimming with the water lilies.



Open woodland swim.



Upper Koolama Gorge swim.

Lowlights Pushing through the vine forest; one or two scrubby camp sites.

Highlights Waterfalls plunging in the tidal gorges, Aboriginal art, good swimming.

Wildlife You are unlikely to see many large animals. Birds should be abundant as will lizards. Many of the small animals are nocturnal and seldom seen.



Rainbow bee eater



Water monitor

Fishing Some good possibilities.

Maps. 1:100 000 King George and Rulhieres or 1: 50 000 King George, Rulhieres, Sanz and Raaf.

Itinerary King George

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change due to weather or other circumstances beyond our control.

Section 1 Faraway Bay to Twin Falls

Day 0 Section one begins in 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 6.30 p.m., outdoor area, Kimberley Croc Lodge. **This meeting is important.** You need to bring a package containing your breakfasts and lunches for section two. If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance and make alternative arrangements for the food drop.

Day 1 Pick up between 7.00 and 7.30 a.m. Pick up is 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.
Fly to Faraway Bay airstrip. Begin walk to Twin Falls. First day about 3 km.

Day 2-7 Walk to Twin Falls in the west. This is a particularly beautiful spot between two creeks overlooking a tidal gorge. Good pools but unlikely to be much flow in May.

Day 8 Float plane pick up and food drop. Those ending here fly back to Kununurra.

Section 2 King George to Faraway Bay

Day 7 Those beginning with this section arrive in Kununurra.

Day 8 Those beginning here come out with the float plane doing the food drop.

Day 9 Day walk near King George.

Day 10-13 Walking toward Faraway Bay. Last night's camp about 4-5 km from airstrip.

Day 14 Finish walk, fly from Faraway Bay airstrip back to Kununurra.

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: reservations@airnorth.com.au



Heading to King George – Glycosmis take off

