

# Carr Boyd Explorer: April 22 - May 5, 2018

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.

We added something extra in 2012 which made that trip the best ever. We can't resist repeating it.

## Section 1: Southern Carr Boyds: April 22-28

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. Our first campsite is normally near the entry to Revolver Creek Gorge, a relatively short, flattish walk from where we get dropped off.



Revolver Creek campsite and pool.

From here, we work our way up the gorge and onto the plateau. The climb is fairly steep. Parts are as difficult as anything we encounter on the rest of the trip. Once on top, the walking becomes easier and we should be able to get to a pool in time for lunch and a swim.



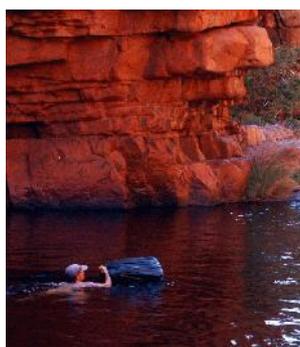
Steep section on first climb, cycads in the background.

As we continue, we get some spectacular views down the gorges below. Every night, we camp next to yet another pool. Every day brings more views and swims.



Swim stop, lunch day 2.

Eventually we drop into one of the most spectacular gorges in the entire range. We follow this downstream to the narrow gap where it exits the southern range, floating our packs on several occasions.



One of the pack floats.



Having a break after the pack float shown at left.

Once through the gap, we continue out into the broad valley separating the northern and southern ranges, camping next to a pool in a wide open area where we get what is likely to be our best view of the night sky.

The following morning, we are met by the helicopter which brings in the food drop and those joining us for section two. Now comes the special addition.

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.

For the pack floats, you can put your pack in a garbag or, if you have a good pack cover, use that. It is very important that you keep the contents of your pack waterproof.

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

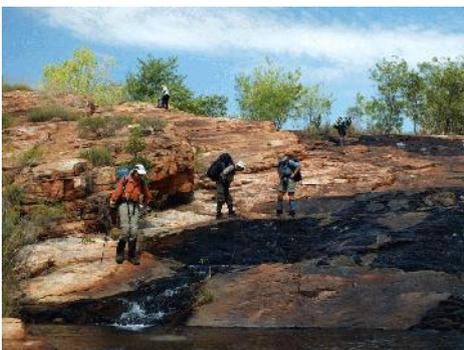
## Section 2: Northern Carr Boyds: April 28 - May 5

Prior to 2012, we spent our first full day continuing through the broad valley which separates the northern and southern Carr Boyd Ranges. Eventually we would reach the base of 'Many Falls Creek' and begin the long climb to the top.

In 2012, we got a bit further out into the valley than we had on previous trips. A careful look at the map showed that a short flight



Waterfall view, much easier without packs. Look closely and you can see someone, centre left.



Coming down a rocky section of Packsaddle Creek.



Dawn breakfast.

in the helicopter would get us past the climb and allow us to explore the many waterfalls without packs.

How could we resist? We'll do it again and have a leisurely day, exploring the waterfalls upstream and down.

The route between the two main creek systems takes us over two low ridges. Although we could camp along the way, we normally go straight through in a day so we can have more time to enjoy what lies beyond. Some of the walking is as easy as anything you'll encounter on any of our trips.

One side trip, sometimes done as a day walk, sometimes as an overnight detour, takes us to a spectacular spot where one of our former guides got married some years ago. He couldn't think of anywhere else he'd rather have been.

There are several possible side walks we can do without packs. Which ones we choose will depend on how fast we are travelling and on how much water there is.

Water levels on some of the smaller creeks can vary dramatically from year to year so this is a decision we can't make until we are actually there.

Our final campsite may be above the last set of waterfalls at the pool the pool there or it may be at another pool below. In either case, we will almost certainly have it to ourselves in spite of being less than 20 km in a straight line from the centre of town.

On the final morning, we follow the creek down to a road where we are met by the vehicle which brings us back to Kununurra.



A day and a half's walk over in ten minutes.



Enjoying a view, midway between the two main creeks.



Enjoying a swim just below the rock ledges in the photo at left.

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** **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 be fairly scrubby. There 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.  
**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 to full day walks without carrying a full pack.
- 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.
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- Gomphrena sp. Grevillea refracta. Walking through the spinifex.
- Wildflowers should still be prolific.
- Hours** You generally walk 4-6 hours per day
- Packs** **Waterproofing.** Essential that you bring one or two strong garbags or something else you can use top keep your pack dry during the pack floats on the southern section. Not needed on the northern section.  
**Pack weight** - level 3 on both sections. Carry food for a week.
- 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 to excellent.
- Lowlights** Some campsites may be a bit cramped. Pushing through thick grass on occasion.
- Highlights** **South:** incredible gorge scenery, floating packs through gorges few people ever visit.  
**North:** waterfalls, gorges, walking without full packs some of the time.
- Wildlife** **South:** Boat trip across Lake Argyle often allows you to see more wallabies than on most of the walks we do.  
**North:** birds everywhere but you are unlikely to see many large animals.
- Fishing** **South.** A couple of possible good spots at beginning and end, little or none in the middle.  
**North.** Fishing is possible only at the very end.

## Notes for 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.

Day packs are likely to be useful on both 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.) See the Getting Here page on our website or contact Air North for more details. Phone: 1800 627474 or (08) 8920 4001; email: [reservations@airnorth.com.au](mailto:reservations@airnorth.com.au)  
If you are coming from Perth, it's worth checking Virgin Australia as well.