

Baw Baw National Park

Visitor Guide

Spectacular summer wildflower displays and snowy woodlands in winter highlight the changing beauty of Baw Baw National Park. Gnarled Snow Gums and Alpine heaths stretch across the Baw Baw Plateau, while majestic tall forests grow within the surrounding river valleys. Whether shooting the rapids on the Thomson River or skiing a cross country trail, Baw Baw National Park offers a wealth of natural experiences.

Location and access

Baw Baw National Park is situated approximately 120 kilometres east of Melbourne and 50 kilometres north of the Latrobe Valley.

The main access to the plateau is from the Mount Erica and St Gwinear carparks along signposted roads off the Thomson Valley Road, north of Erica. The Aberfeldy River camping area is accessed from the historic township of Walhalla or across the dam wall of the Thomson Reservoir.

The Baw Baw Alpine Resort which adjoins the park, can be reached from the Princes Highway at Drouin by following the Mount Baw Baw Tourist Road.

Driving

Roads throughout the area are narrow and winding but offer marvellous scenery with panoramic views. Care should be taken when driving as many of the roads are regularly used by log trucks. Please watch out for wildlife, especially early in the morning and at dusk.

The road past Walhalla into the Aberfeldy River valley is unsuitable for caravans. Many of the tracks in the Thomson and Aberfeldy valleys are suitable for 4WD vehicles only, and some 4WD tracks within the park are subject to seasonal closures.

The Mount St Gwinear Road is a declared hazardous road during winter (bus drivers require an appropriate licence). Snow chains must be carried during the declared ski season and fitted when and where directed.

Remnants of history

In 1860, the renowned government botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller made the first recorded ascent of the Baw Baw Plateau. He named the peaks Mount Mueller and Mount Erica and a flowering plant of the locality. Ferdinand von Mueller used this expedition to further refine his theories about the relationship between Victorian and Tasmanian vegetation.

In 1866, the discovery of gold at Matlock and later at Red Jacket, Donnellys Creek, Walhalla and Toombon sparked a rush of miners to the area. Tracks were cut to the new goldfields skirting the northern and southern slopes of the mountain.

In 1906 the Public Works Department constructed a walking track between Warburton and Walhalla. The track gave access to the Beech forests and fern gullies of the upper Yarra, the spectacular

Yarra Falls and the Baw Baw Plateau. Opened with much fanfare by the Governor of Victoria, the Yarra Track became one of Victoria's most popular walking routes.

Unfortunately the disastrous Black Friday fires of 1939 burnt the huts and most of the area transversed by the track. The track was never rebuilt although bushwalkers can follow part of the original route by following the Australian Alps Walking Track between Walhalla and Mount Whitelaw. In 1979, Baw Baw National Park was declared. The 13,300 hectare park protects the Baw Baw Plateau and the adjacent forests in the Thomson and Aberfeldy river valleys.

Enjoying the park

Walking

Walking is one of the best ways to explore the park. There are many kilometres of walking tracks traversing pristine sub-alpine plant communities and unique landscapes. Be sure to wear strong footwear, pack a snack and carry water and a jacket. Be ready for sudden changes in the weather and always let someone know before you go.

1. *Beech Gully Nature Walk - 400 metres, 30 minutes return*

Starting at the Mount Erica carpark, the Beech Gully Nature Walk provides an excellent introduction to the plants and wildlife of the Mountain Ash forests and cool temperate rainforests of the southern slopes of the Baw Baw's.

2. *Mount St Gwinear Track - 6km, 3 hours return*

The walk to the summit of Mount St Gwinear winds through heathland and Snow Gum forest. The magnificent views, stretching across the valleys of the Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers and into the Victorian Alps, are a perfect reward.

3. *Mushroom Rocks - 3 kilometres, 2 hours return*

Commencing at the Mount Erica carpark, this popular walk along a section of the Australian Alps Walking Track leads to a maze of giant granite tors.

4. *Australian Alps Walking Track*

Beginning in the old gold mining town of Walhalla and ending near Canberra, the 650 kilometre trail embraces the best of the Alps, the country's highest peaks, snow-capped mountains and plains, cattlemen's huts, tall forests, snow gum woodlands and many historic sites.



Parks Victoria Ranger

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For more information call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit our website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

For further information contact:

Parks Victoria Information Centre
13 1963
or visit our website on
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria Erica Office
Thomson Valley Road,
Parkers Corner
ph (03) 5165 3204

Latrobe Information Centre
Princes Hwy, Traralgon
ph (03) 5174 3199

Caring for the environment

Please help us care for our parks and reserves by remembering these guidelines:

All native plants and animals in the park are protected.

Please keep to designated walking tracks to avoid becoming lost.

Bins are not provided within the park. Please take your rubbish home.

Dredging and gold fossicking are not permitted.

Vehicles including trail bikes may only be driven on formed roads open to the public, and must be fully road registered. All drivers and riders must hold a current licence.

Cats and dogs are not permitted within the park.

Fires may only be lit in the fireplaces provided. No fires to be lit on days of total fire ban (Eastern District).

Pack a picnic ...

Baw Baw National Park is a delightful setting for a picnic. Two picnic areas are situated within the park; at the St Gwinear and the Mount Erica carparks. Tables and pit toilets are provided. Facilities including gas BBQ's and picnic shelters are also provided at the nearby Silvertop Picnic Area and within Walhalla.

Staying Overnight

A camping area with fireplaces, pit toilets and picnic tables is provided on the banks of the Aberfeldy River. The Eastern Tyers Camping Area is the first overnight stop from Walhalla for bushwalkers on the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Dispersed bush camping is permitted on the Baw Baw Plateau. The Plateau is a fuel stove only area, therefore no solid fuel fires are permitted. The area falls within domestic water supply catchments, so care must be taken with the disposal of human waste. Caravan parks are situated at Rawson, Erica and Moe. Other accommodation including guesthouses and bed and breakfasts are found within the neighbouring towns.

Hunting

Hunting of deer is only permitted during the recognised open season in a section of the park. Special conditions apply. Before undertaking this activity seek further information from Parks Victoria or the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Cycling

Bicycles may only be ridden on formed roads and tracks open to the public. Cycling is not permitted on the Baw Baw Plateau, on walking tracks or Whitelaw, Plane and Trigger Creek Tracks.

Cross Country Skiing, Tobogganing and Snowplay

Baw Baw National Park is renowned for its cross country skiing. With elevations of up to 1500 metres in the park, snow can be expected from June to September. There are 11 kilometres of marked ski trails across the plateau and a permanent pole line links the Baw Baw Alpine Resort to the St Gwinear carpark.

St Gwinear is a popular destination for families seeking a fun day in the snow. There are two graded toboggan runs, and areas suitable for building a snowman or for throwing a snow ball. A kiosk with toboggan hire regularly operates from the St Gwinear carpark during the snow season.

Canoeing

The Thomson River provides for canoeing and rafting on Grade 3 water. The best river levels depend on water releases from the Thomson Dam. Canoes can be launched at Beardmores Track, Low Saddle Track (4WD only) or at the Narrows. There are no facilities provided within the park for riverside camping.

Fishing

The Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers are an excellent location to try your luck at fly fishing. Catches from streams within the park include Brown Trout, River Blackfish and eels.

A recreational fishing licence is required to take fish (including bait and shellfish) in all Victorian marine, estuary and freshwaters. Licences are available from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and most retail fishing stores, as is the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide which specifies bag limits and seasons for different fish.

Horse riding

The park is an attractive setting for riding. Horse's may only be ridden on formed roads and tracks open to the public (except for Whitelaw, Plane and Trigger Creek Tracks). Horse riding is not permitted on any walking tracks within the park, on the Baw Baw Plateau or above the bridge on the Mount Erica Road. Horse-based camping is not permitted within the park.

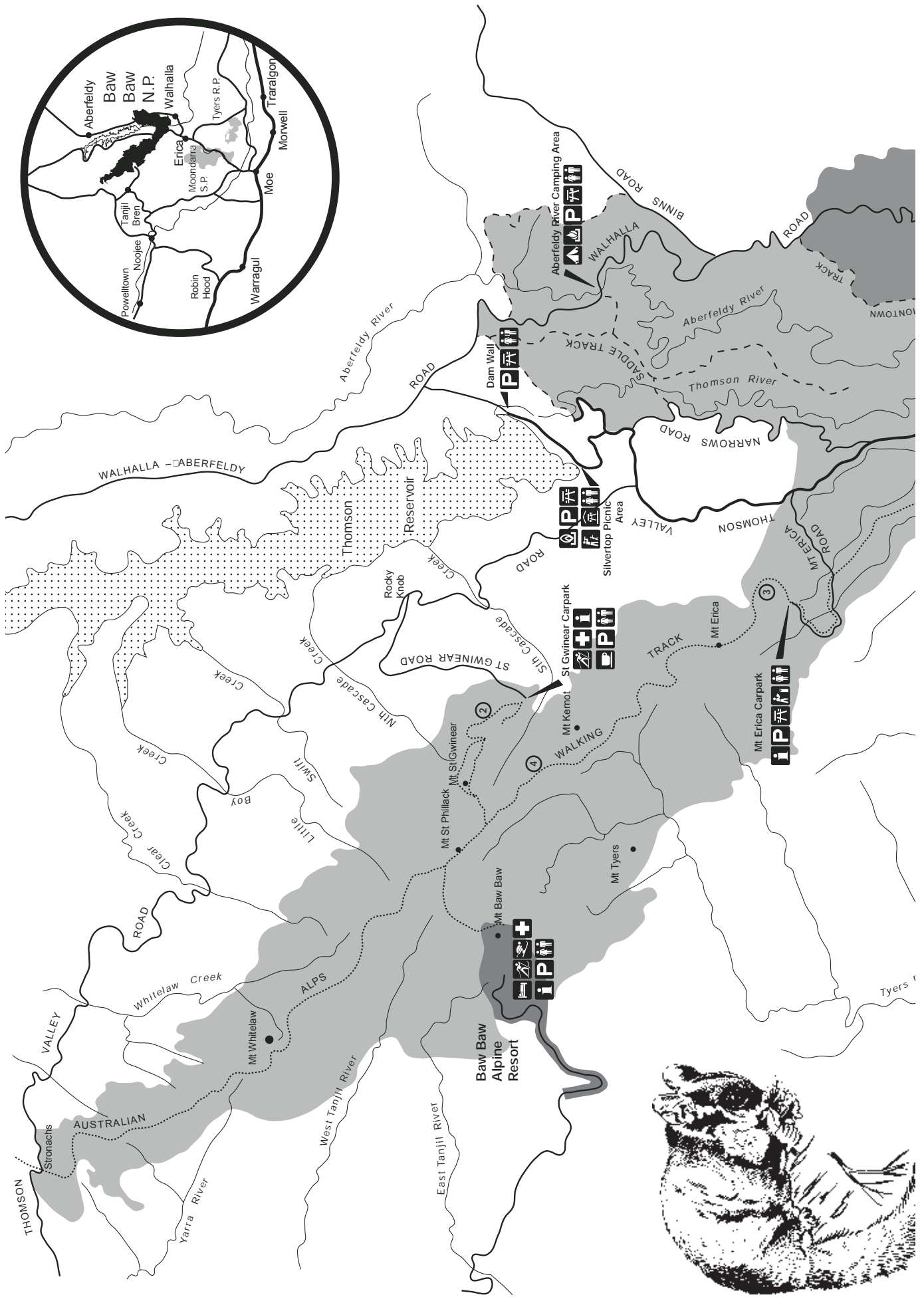
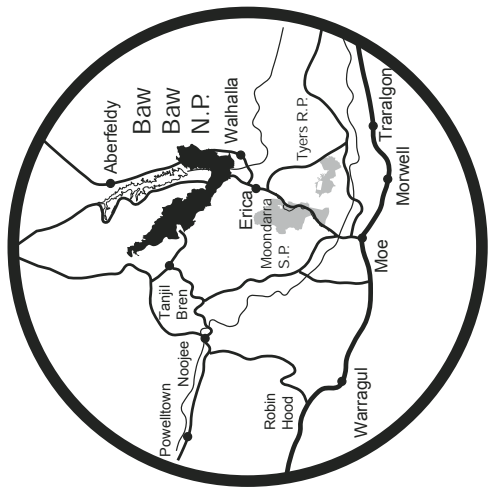
A haven for plants and wildlife

The Baw Baw Plateau features extensive sub-alpine woodlands dominated by Snow Gum with a scrubby understorey of Mueller's Bush-pea, Alpine Pepper and Dusty Daisy-bush. Wet alpine heathlands and thick spongy beds of sphagnum moss surround clear pools of water. With such a diverse array of plants these heathlands provide a spectacular display of wildflowers in season.

The upper slopes of the range support tall open forests of Alpine Ash, Shining Gum and Tingaringy Gum. At lower altitudes tall forests of Mountain Ash, Messmate and Silver Wattle grow and are often shrouded in mist. Pockets of cool temperate rainforest with a lush understorey of ferns flourish within the sheltered gullies. Due to the rain shadow created by the Baw Baw's, the Thomson and Aberfeldy River valleys are dominated by dry forests of Silvertop, Messmate and Peppermints with an open understorey of small shrubs, grasses and bracken.

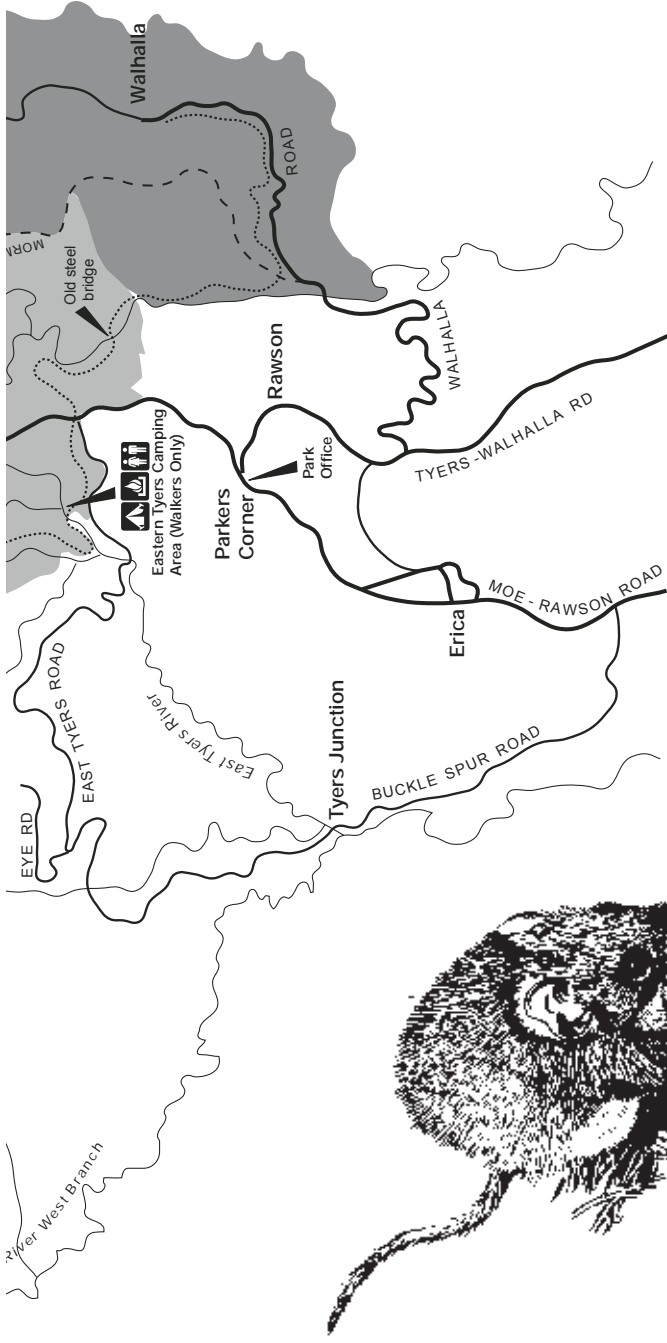
At night the forest comes to life as possums, owls and bats emerge from tree hollows to feed amongst the spreading branches of the forest canopy. If you are lucky you may catch a glimpse of a Superb Lyrebird scratching about amongst the leaf litter looking for insects and grubs. Their clear loud imitations echo through the forest.

The endangered Leadbeater's Possum, Victoria's state faunal emblem, inhabits the Mountain Ash forests of the park. It relies on old hollow trees and the dense understorey of Wattles for nesting and feeding. The park is also home to the Common Wombat, Swamp Wallaby, Greater Glider, Yellow bellied Glider, Sugar Glider, Mountain Brush-tailed Possum, Brown Antechinus and Platypus.





Brown Antechinus and Sugar Gliders are two of the native animal species found in the park.



Baw Baw National Park

	Baw Baw National Park		Kiosk
	Walhalla Historic Area		Lookout
	Baw Baw Alpine Resort		Parking
	Waterbody		Picnic area
	Sealed road		Picnic shelter
	Unsealed road		Self guided walk
	Vehicular track		Toilets
	Walking track		

Recreational Facilities

	Accommodation		Map
	Camping		Lookout
	Cross country skiing (winter only)		Parking
	Downhill skiing (winter only)		Picnic area
	Fireplace		Picnic shelter
	First aid (winter only)		Self guided walk
	Gas barbecue		Toilets
	Information		

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KILOMETRES

Cartography by Charles Walsh
Nature Tourism Services 0017

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