

Plants, animals and landscape

Barren Grounds is a typical hanging swamp plateau, dominated by heath-land. Most of the plateau is bounded by sheer cliffs up to 70 metres high that fall away to rainforest and verdant farm land,

Native plants

The reserve is famous for its flowering heath in spring and summer, with banksias flowering in winter. You can also see areas of woodland, eucalypt forest and rainforest.

Native animals

The reserve supports a diverse array of mammal fauna and it is a hotspot for threatened species. Carnivorous marsupials such as the Spotted-tailed Quoll and the Antechinus share the woodlands and heath with foraging Eastern Pygmy-possums, Long-nosed Potoroos, Echidnas, wallabies and wombats. The reserve is rich with bird-life – 179 species have been recorded. The flowering heath offers a colourful display of birds and blossoms. Many kinds of honeyeaters can be seen in the heath, along with the more elusive

Southern Emu-wren.

Barren Grounds was originally dedicated in 1956 to protect the habitat of rare birds. Lyrebirds, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, tree creepers inhabit the more forested sites.

Contact the park office

Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre

Located in the northern section of Morton National Park, this award-winning visitors centre a visitor focus for parks on the South Coast and in the Southern Highlands.

Phone: 02 4887 7270

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Street address: Fitzroy Falls Visitors Centre, Nowra Road
Fitzroy Falls NSW 2577

Opening hours: 9:00am-5:00pm, daily
(closed Christmas Day)



Barren Grounds Nature Reserve



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Barren Grounds Nature Reserve

The heath-land plateau of Barren Grounds is loved by both walkers and birdwatchers - particularly in spring, when it is a mass of wildflowers. A range of walks offer magnificent views of the Illawarra coastline and surrounding countryside.

The reserve is between Robertson and Kiama, on the Jamberoo Mountain Road. It is 16km south-east of Robertson and 8km east of the Carrington Falls turn-off.

Picnics and barbecues

There's a picnic area near the entrance to the reserve where you'll find tables for relaxing.

Sightseeing

The Illawarra Lookout offers spectacular views of the Illawarra Range plateau, rural hinterland and coastline.

Walking

There are a number of walking tracks in the reserve, ranging from an easy 1.5km to a more demanding 20km.

Illawarra Lookout walk - 2km (easy, 30 minutes)

Illawarra Lookout provides superb views of the Illawarra coast and hinterland. This return walk starts near the picnic area and passes through woodland and heath on the way to the lookout. You'll be walking through ground parrot and eastern bristlebird habitat- keep an eye out for these threatened birds.

Redbank Gully Walk - 1.5km (easy, 30 minutes)

This heath-land walk is particularly good in winter, when the flowering banksias attract up to 10 species of honeyeater to the park. The loop walk starts at the small car park about 150m from the entrance gate and returns to the car park via the main entrance road.

Cooks Nose Lookout walk - 6km (medium difficulty, 2 hours 30 minutes)

You'll mainly be walking through the park's rich heath-lands on this walk, which travels from the picnic area to Cooks Nose on the edge of the escarpment. The track has some moderate grades and the views are spectacular.

Flying Fox Pass walk - 5km (easy, 2 hours 30 minutes)

In the mid-20th century, a flying fox (a suspended cable-and-pulley system) was used to transport timber from the valley up the escarpment. You can see the old flying fox at the end of this walk, which goes from heath-land to dense woodland. The walk starts at the picnic area. Return is via the same track.

Griffiths Trail - 8km (medium difficulty, 3 hours)

This track passes through a range of vegetation communities, including heath and tall woodland. It starts at the picnic area, heading out to Saddleback Trig and then loops to the picnic area via the natural stone bridge creek crossing.

Kangaroo Ridge Walk - 20km (medium difficulty, 8 hours)

This long return walk starts at the picnic area and wanders through open heath-land to the edge of the Illawarra Escarpment. The views are fantastic.