

Mungo Outback & Conservation Journey Victoria & New South Wales

Dunes in the
Outback

MUNGO OUTBACK & CONSERVATION JOURNEY

MILDURA, MUNGO & HATTAH-KULKYNE NATIONAL PARK VICTORIA & NEW SOUTH WALES

COME AND JOIN US on one of the best Outback wildlife experiences in Australia.

Discover the animals and history of the Australian outback at Lake Mungo in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. Track majestic wildlife and travel expansive red sand plains sprinkled with kangaroos, emus, and pink cockatoos (aka Major Mitchell's). Your private nature tour is conducted by an experienced wildlife guide who reveals Mungo's arid land, wildlife and ancient Aboriginal heritage.

Walk in the shade of desert pines searching for brilliant parrots and sleepy lizards. Climb mighty sand dunes for expansive views over the desert.

Experience the peace of the Australian outback while staying in 4-star accommodation at remote Mungo Lodge beside Lake Mungo.



PICTURE: TOURISM AUSTRALIA

Exploring the ancient Mungo lunette



ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrival in Mildura and tour briefing (domestic airfare not included)

Make your own way (fly or self drive) to Mildura arriving late afternoon. Airport pick-up by your guide and transfer to your accommodation. Guide will provide a trip briefing in the evening.

○ Accommodation: Quality Hotel Mildura

Day 2 Hattah-Kulkyne National Park

Breakfast at hotel.

Hattah-Kulkyne NP contains exceptionally diverse examples of Australia's semi-arid zones. Situated on a floodplain of the Murray River and extending into the red dunes of the mallee deserts, this park has a little of everything. Ephemeral lakes are the key feature of this 48,000ha park; water levels of these lakes ebb and flow with the years – attracting a diverse range of wildlife. Hattah-Kulkyne is also famous for its birdlife and incredibly diverse dryland vegetation.

Today we'll head south from Mildura and spend all day in this magnificent park. We'll document the condition of the lakes and search for some of its most elusive species including the Mallee emu-wren, the malleefowl and numerous other species of parrots and cockatoos. We'll also keep an eye out for reptiles including geckos, skinks, snakes and the shy and beautifully marked sand goanna.

Towards the end of the day we'll traverse the entire centre of the park, through beautiful sand dunes and vast open vistas en route back to Mildura.

△ Accommodation: Quality Hotel Mildura

○ Breakfast and lunch provided

Day 3 The Murray River & Lake Mungo

Breakfast at hotel.

Today we head outback but before we do we explore the Murray River and associated billabongs (waterholes). Sometimes large numbers of parrots, cockatoos and other birds are seen here as they arrive out of the desert looking for food and water near the

rivers. In the afternoon we head out into arid lands towards Lake Mungo.

En-route we enter the 2400sq.km Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area (WHA) and walk along an ancient fossilised watercourse – Willandra Creek – that gave its name to this gigantic lake system. The creek, like the entire system, has been dry for 18,000 years. Later we enter Mungo National Park – within the WHA – and watch the sunset over the dry bed of Lake Mungo, a magical experience. Here you will learn how the Willandra Lakes system dried out over thousands of years as the climate warmed. Because the country is flat, any rise places you on top of a world that stretches to an endless 360 degree horizon. We often have our first sightings of desert parrots and cockatoos and the marvellous macropods: western-grey and red kangaroos.

△ Accommodation: Mungo Lodge

(3 nights)

○ Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided

ITINERARY CONT. →

Mungo Outback & Conservation Journey. Victoria & New South Wales

Day 485 Lake Mungo – Wildlife & Culture – a 50,000 year journey

Breakfast at the lodge.

Why the Mungo outback is special?

Australian Aboriginal people have lived and hunted beside Lake Mungo for 50,000 years. Mungo National Park is the site of the oldest-known cremation of any human – dating back 50,000 years. The region has been continuously occupied by Aboriginal people since that time – the longest-known occupation of any land by any people on earth. Ongoing research found the area to be so important it was listed as a World Heritage Area in 1981. Mungo National Park offers a unique insight into climate change, its effect on human habitation and the environment over many thousands of years. Mungo is also home to many arid land animals and birds including kangaroos, rare parrots and cockatoos, birds of prey, reptiles and many others. Skeletal remains of extinct marsupials, the forebears of Australia’s unique suite of wildlife, are still found around Lake Mungo. Today the land boasts two of Australia’s five species of kangaroos, many rare and beautiful parrots, birds of prey, reptiles and a rich arid land fl ra.

Discovering Mungo National Park

Over the next two days we will explore Mungo National Park in detail on a journey that will help you appreciate the enormous significance of this region to human and wildlife history. The park itself covers more than 1110sq.km surrounding the ancient bed of Lake Mungo.

Now dry, Lake Mungo has been a living place for Aboriginal people for at least 50,000 years. The dunes beside the lake have eroded to expose the oldest human living site on earth, which is the main reason for the creation of the WHA. Another reason for its status is a unique layer of exposed megafauna skeletal remains that tell of a cooler, wetter time in Australia when giant marsupials and Aboriginal people coexisted beside a magnificent freshwater lake. Lake Mungo was a massive overflow from the Willandra Lakes system which, before it dried, had an inlet but no outlet.

On a series of walks and drives we’ll investigate the wildlife of this place including an amazing number of birds (including emus), two species of kangaroos, reptiles and



Mungo Lodge

a remarkable variety of desert vegetation.

We travel through a diverse array of habitats varying from dense mallee woodlands, cypress pine/buloke woodlands, mulga scrub and vast expanses of saltbush. Huge white sand dunes rise high above the dry lake beds and have been eroded in some areas allowing burrowing birds such as the white-backed swallow to build their nests. We often see pink cockatoos and occasional cockatiels in this region along with chats and arid land fairy wrens. The crested bellbird is often heard and sometimes seen. Raptors including the spotted harrier, black falcon, grey falcon and wedge-tailed eagle are known to nest in the area. There is a possibility of seeing malleefowl but they are extremely rare. Emus are abundant.

During our journey we drive across the dry bed of Lake Mungo to lunettes (wind-curved sand dunes) to begin a “story line” through 50,000 years of Aboriginal history beginning at the lake bed and rising high into the eroded dunes.

You will learn about the people who lived at this place, see evidence of their campsites, view the remains of their cooking fires and, depending on the movement of the sand and soil, you may even help with the discovery of new sites! Your guide will also point out evidence of extinct fauna. It will become obvious that this now-dry arid area was once a thriving wetland where large numbers of waterbirds and animals co-existed beside a vibrant population of Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years. Where people lived they also died and not far from where you will be walking is the oldest-recorded human cremation site in the world. Burial sites continue to be exposed throughout the Willandra Lakes WHA and are monitored

carefully by Traditional Owners to minimise disturbance and engender respect for their ancestors. Due to the sacred nature of these burial sites they are not accessible to the general public. As we travel we’ll stop often to search for birds and other animals and learn about the vegetation in this constantly changing landscape. You have the opportunity to climb high into the huge Mungo dunefield for stunning views across the desert.

- △ Accommodation: Mungo Lodge
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided

Day 6 Return to civilisation and transfer onwards

After an optional early morning bird walk we enjoy a final breakfast at Mungo Lodge before driving out of the desert to Mildura Airport where you will depart.

- Breakfast provided

Extend your trip – we are happy to help!



Male emu with his chicks

Mungo Outback & Conservation Journey, Victoria & New South Wales

Male and female Red Kangaroo



COST

\$2490 /PERSON TWIN SHARE. \$735 SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Costs include the following services as per itinerary

- 5 nights accommodation as per itinerary
- Experienced wildlife guide throughout days 1-6
- Sightseeing as per itinerary by private air-conditioned charter vehicle
- Meals included: daily breakfast, 4x lunches, 3x dinners
- Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Costs do not include

- Domestic or international airfares
- Pre-registration, late check-out or day use at hotels other than specified above
- Guide services other than specified
- Meals/beverages other than specified
- Tips & gratuities
- Optional tours/services

Conservation component on this tour

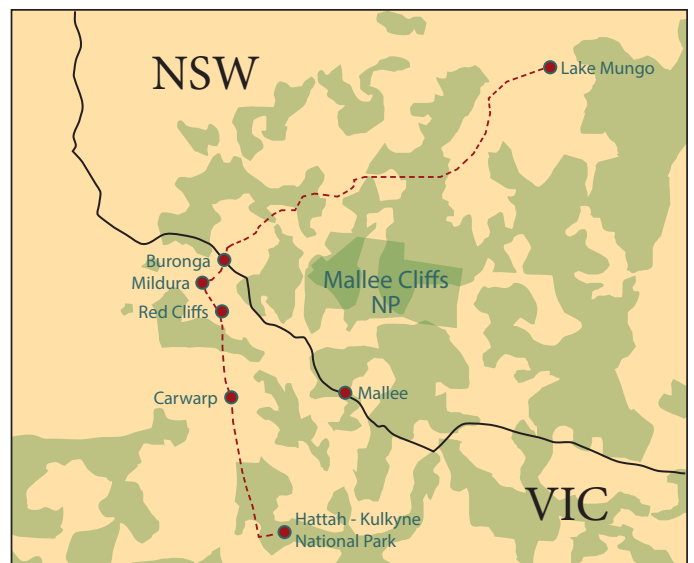
These tours include opportunities to help with the conservation of wildlife and in ensuring the natural environment that supports wildlife remains healthy.

They also work tirelessly to improve human understanding of the impacts of climate change and other human-induced changes to our environment. Leading by example they aim to ensure that wildlife continues to thrive in Australia and elsewhere in the world. 'Citizen science' is playing a significant role in helping scientists and others

to understand the major changes that are occurring in the world and that work such as theirs is bringing about changes that help wildlife.

This tour offers significant opportunities to experience and document wildlife in a near-pristine environment doing the following:

- **Bird & wildlife surveys:** for the entire trip, you are helping wildlife – your wildlife guide records all species seen and uploads this data to online atlases for wildlife conservation purposes.
- **Vegetation evaluation:** to assess the impact of reduced rainfall and higher temperatures on vegetation communities.



Mungo Outback & Conservation Journey. Victoria & New South Wales

Guide and guests with shingleback lizard



WHY CONSERVATION TRAVEL?

Climate change

This is a special trip to Lake Mungo (in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area) and Hattah-Kulkyne National Parks as both display significant indicators of climate change. The arid-land lake systems of both parks have been subjected to the processes of climate change, not only by recent man-made changes but also in prehistoric times through planetary changes in temperatures.

The primary purpose of this trip is to monitor and learn about the impacts of climate change on wildlife and vegetation. We'll do this by searching out indicators of change and comparing the past with the present.

You will be guided on this trip by one or more world-renowned wildlife guides who will help you understand nature while you enjoy your holiday.

Conservation travel is all about making a difference by getting out into the bush and

bringing about real change; it's opening our minds to what we, as individuals, can do to bring about change in perceptions of some of the world's biggest issues. By travelling into areas such as Mungo and Hattah-Kulkyne we can monitor change and, as citizen scientists, we can tell the world what we've seen and hopefully bring about change

Wildlife highlights may include

- 80+ species of birds
- Mallee emu-wren
- Malleefowl
- Red & western grey kangaroos
- Sand goanna & other reptiles

Featured locations

- Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area
- Hattah-Kulkyne National Park
- Mungo National Park
- Kings Billabong

On this trip You will be helping nature while you enjoy it. This is Conservation Travel.



Pink cockatoo feeding

Mungo Outback & Conservation Journey, Victoria & New South Wales

Pink cockatoos



COVID-19
 ALL RESPONSES
 WILL BE MADE IN
 ACCORDANCE WITH
 BEST PRACTICE
 MEDICAL AND OFFICIAL
 GOVERNMENT ADVICE.

EXTRA INFO

Travel dates

- 12–17 March 2022
- 7–12 April 2022
- 1–6 May 2022
- 5–10 June 2022

Accommodation

- **Mildura:** Quality Hotel Mildura Grand www.choicehotels.com/en-au/victoria/mildura/quality-inn-hotels
- **Mungo National Park:** Mungo Lodge www.mungolodge.com.au

Guide

- Experienced wildlife guide days 1–6

Costs as per itinerary

- Costs are valid for travel dates only.

- All costs are based on per person twin share costs in Australian Dollars (AUD).
 Min. 6 pax / Max. 14 pax
 2022 prices:
 Twin share per person **AUD \$2490**
 Single supplement **AUD \$735**

Packing list and other information

- We will supply you with a detailed packing list and other information when you make your booking.

COVID-19

- **Accommodation and meals:** Strict hygiene conditions apply to the way accommodation is prepared for your stay and in the serving of meals.
- **Vehicles, hygiene & social distancing:** all activities will involve careful adherence to cleanliness. Hand sanitiser will be available

in many locations and in all land-based vehicles. Social distancing will always be an issue on board vehicles; it would be sensible for you to bring your own face masks and hand sanitiser. We may not fill all seats in a vehicle to allow for social distancing.

The NSW and VIC government approved COVID-19 Safety Plan is in place and all suppliers are Covid Clean accredited.



Military dragon

PICTURES: TOURISM AUSTRALIA

EMAIL: TRAVEL@AUSTRALIANGEOGRAPHIC.COM

PHONE: 0413 560 210