

Birding in the Gorge: Tully Gorge Camp Out, 5-7th August

You haven't experienced the 'wet' tropics until you have stayed at Tully Gorge! The Tully River originates high in the Cardwell Range, over 600-700m above gorge. It then plunges into the narrow, densely forested Tully Gorge (dropping 350-400m over a short distance of the river), before winding its way across the lowland to the sea. Tully Gorge is one of the wettest parts of the wet tropics world heritage area, so bring your wet weather gear, just in case.

Parts of the Tully Gorge are within the Wooroonoonan Important Bird Area. Birds of significance in the Wooroonoonan IBA include Southern Cassowary, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Golden Bowerbird, Lovely Fairywren, Macleay's Honeyeater, Bridled Honeyeater, Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Fernwren, Atherton Scrubwren, Mountain Thornbill, Chowchilla, Bower's Shrike-thrush, Pied Monarch, Victoria's Riflebird, and Pale-yellow Robin.

We don't have a comprehensive bird list of Tully Gorge and hope you will help us make one during this campout.

We will be camping at Tully Gorge camping and day-use area (sign posted on the road as Tully Gorge Recreational Area), about 41km north-west of Tully (allow 40 minutes to drive). The camping area is on the sealed road to Kareeya Hydro, a power station at the top of the gorge, also the end of this road. It is an open, grassy camping area beside the boulder-strewn Tully River, has wheelchair accessible compost toilets, a shower with cold water, fire pit style barbecues, picnic shelter and sites suitable for tents and caravans.



Camping fees apply. From 1 July 2016, fees for camping permits in national parks are \$6.15 per person per night, or \$24.60 per family per night. For more information about Tully Gorge National Park and to book your camping permit at Tully Gorge Campground, **go to:** <http://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks/tully-gorge/about.html>

Remember to be self-sufficient. Bring: drinking water, cooking and camping equipment, basic first-aid kit, insect repellent and clothing to avoid insect bites, hat, sunscreen and sunglasses (for a good day), wet-weather clothing and gear (for a not so good day), sturdy, reliable footwear and strong rubbish bags.

To get there

Tully is 141 km (about 2 hours' drive) south of Cairns on the Bruce Highway. For Tully Gorge, turn off the Bruce Highway onto Dean Road, 1.4 km south of Tully. Drive 35 km west—the road becomes Jarra Creek Road then Cardstone Road—to the National Park entrance. Drive a further 7 km to the Tully Gorge camping and day-use area (see maps below). Cardstone Road ends at the Kareeya hydropower station, 10 km further along from the camping area. The road to the camp ground is sealed and accessible by conventional vehicles. There is no road access from here to the Tully Falls Road and Tully Gorge lookout—these sites are accessible from Ravenshoe on the Tableland.

Important information:

- Last fuel, drinking water and shops are at Tully. We will be travelling 50km into the gorge and also driving within the Misty Mountains area. Allow enough fuel to cover 200km.
- Do not swim in the Tully River at the camping and day-use areas or anywhere along the river—water released from the dam upstream can cause river levels to rise rapidly, and without warning.
- Estuarine crocodiles occur in the Tully River right up to Tully Gorge camping and day-use areas—do not swim here and remember to be croc wise.
- Also be Cass-o-wary as they too frequent the area, and with luck we will see one.

Program*

Friday 5th August

Arrive Tully Gorge campground late afternoon and set up camp. Birding around campground at own leisure.

6pm Optional BYO BBQ at Tully Gorge Campground

Saturday 6th August

7am birding around the campground (elevation around 120m). There is also a 375 m loop walking track at the campground to explore and a short track down to the river.

8.30am Meet at the Tully River Bridge, about 4 km back towards Tully. Bring morning tea, lunch and items for a day out. There is a large open area to park vehicles on the gorge side of the river. We will bird in this area for about 45mins to an hour. Day trippers can join us here.

9.30am. Road conditions permitting we will drive along the Cochable Creek/H road into the 'Misty Mountains' This is an unsealed road. Four-wheel drives are recommended so car-pooling will be encouraged. Please contact us in advance if you require a lift. We will drive to Cochable Creek camping area (elevation around 200m), stopping occasionally along the road to bird watch. There is a trail system at the campground for further exploration. When we have seen enough, return to Tully Gorge Campground.

6pm Optional BYO BBQ at Tully Gorge Campground

Sunday 7th August

7.30am Birding locally at the campground, then drive to Kareeya Hydro (about 12km further along the Tully Gorge road, elevation around 240m), birding wherever we can along this road back towards the campground. Please note, buses carrying people for rafting on the Tully River frequent this road. Return to base for morning tea and pack up camp.

The rest of the day is at your liberty. Depart Tully Gorge when ready, visiting any sites of interest on the way back to Tully and your home.

Options

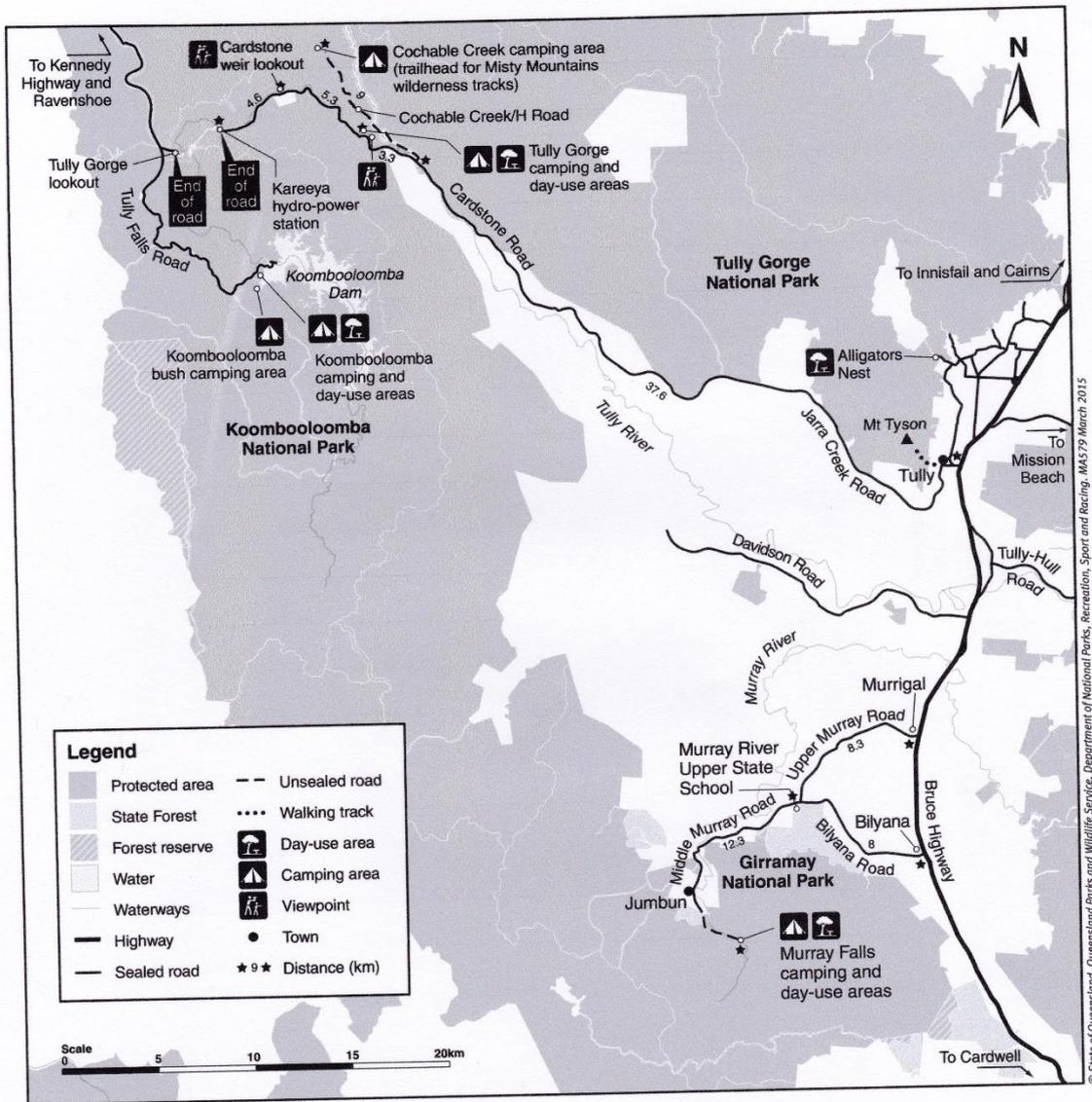
Where it is safe to park the vehicles, some of the bridges offer glimpses of rainforest lined rocky creeks, cascades and the Tully River.

Jarra Creek (only 11 km from the golden gumboot in Tully, elevation less than 50m above sea level) has some remanent riverine vegetation and a pull in on the Tully side of the bridge. The dirt vehicle track leading from this pull in area, goes along and down to the creek and is worthy of a birding walk. Remember to be croc-wise. Rocky Creek is another spot worth checking for birds on the way (no track here). Through the agricultural areas between Tully and the Tully Gorge National Park, banana fields and cattle grazing predominate, and the birds associated with that habitat can often be seen here.

For further information and to register your interest in attending, please contact Sandra Christensen via email: schristensen666@gmail.com or by mobile phone: 0448845842. That way if the weather turns really bad, we can let you know if the campout has to be postponed. Otherwise we look forward to seeing you there.

*Please note: the program may change depending on road access and unforeseen weather events. If you register your intention to attend, we can inform you of any changes that may occur

Tully area map



Tully Gorge camping and day-use areas

Tully Gorge National Park

