



Onkaparinga River National Park

(Incorporating the Onkaparinga River Recreation Park)

If you are interested in fishing, canoeing, rock climbing or photography, this spectacular park is a must visit for you. South Australia's second longest river, the Onkaparinga enters the Park in a steep sided valley and flows into a magnificent gorge with cliffs up to 50 metres high and large permanent rock pools. The park, which incorporates the Onkaparinga River Recreation Park, follows the river to the sea, discovering an entirely different environment in its estuary and wetlands.

Visiting

The park is located on the Main South Road, Old Noarlunga, 35 km south of Adelaide City centre. Access to the estuary area is from River Road (turn right off Main South Road at Hackham), Commercial Road, Port Noarlunga South and Sauerbiers Road, Port Noarlunga South. The park's main walking area is on the northern side of the gorge from Piggott Range Road where there are a variety of easy accessible trails. Southern gates along Chapel Hill Road provide access to the gorge area. Admission is free.

Natural Attractions

Onkaparinga Gorge's spectacular rugged scenery make it particularly attractive to bushwalkers, but the steep trails in this section of the park are suitable only for the experienced and fit. However, a number of less demanding trails provide an opportunity to enjoy the gorge without having to descend to river level.

The Echidna Trail winds its way amongst some of the best remnant vegetation and visits six heritage sites, including huts and houses built in the 1880s. The dominant overstorey species is Peppermint Box, with River Red Gum in the gullies and Pink Gum on the higher slopes. Other plant species include sheoak, Golden Wattle, a small stand of native pine and various herbaceous ground covers. Twenty-seven native orchid species have been recorded in the area.

See the flora species lists for Onkaparinga River National Park:

- [Alphabetical \(150Kb PDF\)](#)
- [By Family \(200Kb PDF\)](#)

See the flora species lists for Onkaparinga River Recreation Park:

- [Alphabetical \(100Kb PDF\)](#)
- [By Family \(100Kb PDF\)](#)

The estuary section of the park, on the other side of Main South Road, offers a contrasting wetlands environment which provides breeding habitats for numerous fish and bird species. The areas of samphire flats and mudbanks are important feeding grounds for wading birds, swans and pelicans. A 5 km interpretive trail around the wetlands can be accessed from River Road.

History

The lower reaches of the Onkaparinga River were inhabited by the Kaurna Aboriginal people, and the name of the river is taken from the Kaurna name meaning "women's river". European settlement and farming in the district began about 1840 leading to the rapid displacement of the Aboriginal inhabitants. Noarlunga (now Old Noarlunga) was the business centre with farm produce being transported 10 km down river to Port Noarlunga.

The remains of Pingle Farm, built in 1862, can be seen in the park on the estuary side of Main South Road. In 1878, several additions were made to the property, including an underground water tank, a large stone barn and a shed. The farm was occupied by the Jared family until it was purchased by the South Australian Government in the early 1970s.

The Friends of Onkaparinga Park volunteer group was formed in 1986 and won the Greening of Adelaide recognition award for its revegetation work in 1990. The group was named the most outstanding Friends Group of the Year in 1992. It can be contacted through the Department for Environment's Sturt District Office on (61 8) 8278 5477.

Facilities

Further information on the park is available from the Department for Environment's Sturt District Office on (61 8) 8278 5477.