

Great Otway National Park – Forrest and surrounds

Visitor Guide



This section of Great Otway National Park, along with Otway Forest Park, encompasses a stunning landscape including the undulating plains and plateaus of the hinterlands and the magnificent and towering mountain ash forests. Mountain bike riding and birdwatching along the peaceful walk at Lake Elizabeth are among a range of pursuits to be enjoyed here.



Getting there

Two major roads connect Colac with Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park including Colac-Lavers Hill Road and Colac-Forrest Road. From the west, approach via Port Campbell along the Great Ocean Road.

Things to see and do

Lake Elizabeth

Explore Lake Elizabeth and enjoy the beautiful forest surrounds. This lake was created in 1952 when one of the heaviest rains on record resulted in a massive landslide that dammed the East Barwon River and turned a remote forested valley into a lake.

Walking



Lake Elizabeth – 2km, 1 hour return

A colony of platypus resides at Lake Elizabeth. Tread lightly and you may spot one. Usually the best time for this is at dawn or dusk. This tall forest walk ambles alongside the river and leads to the lake. Dog owners should keep dogs on leads when visiting this area to reduce incidents of snake bite.

Picnicking

Ideal and beautiful picnic areas include Lake Elizabeth Visitor Area, Otway Forest Park, Dandos Campground, Birnham Station and Stevensons Falls Campground.

Camping

Lake Elizabeth Campground is tucked beneath tall eucalypts and sits on the bank of the east branch of the Barwon River. It is separate to the Day Visitor Area and 1km from the lake. This section of the park offers excellent dogs on lead camping opportunities. For more information and to book go to www.parks.vic.gov.au/stay

Otway Forest Park is another great option for dogs on lead camping opportunities nearby.

For information about Otway Forest camping areas including Dandos Campground, Stevensons Falls Campground and the mountain bike trailheads visit www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Horse riding

Experience and enjoy the natural environment on horseback. Permits may be required for some sections of the park.

The Wonga and Barongarook areas in the Otway Forest Park are ideal for horse riding as there are a number of wide, slashed roadsides. For more information, see the Horseriding in the Otways Parks fact sheet at www.parks.vic.gov.au

Mountain bike riding

The Forrest area caters for all levels of mountain bike riders with more than 60km of formed tracks and a 12km mountain bike loop linking Forrest, West Barwon Reservoir and Lake Elizabeth.

Visit www.delwp.vic.gov.au for more information.

Four wheel driving

A range of formed tracks and roads provide four wheel drive access throughout the parks. Seasonal track closures apply to many tracks in the park. For more information call Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or go to www.parks.vic.gov.au

Fishing and hunting

A number of streams and rivers which flow through the parks provide great opportunities for keen anglers. Adults generally require a Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence, available from the Victorian Fisheries Authority at www.vfa.vic.gov.au, or your local fishing licence outlet.

Recreational hunting of game species in the Otway Forest Park requires a game licence issued by DELWP, contacted on 136 186, and is only permitted during officially notified seasons.

Recreational hunting of pest animals in the Otway Forest Park does not require a permit. Hunters must be aware of restrictions.

Dogs in the Otways

In this area of Great Otway National Park, dogs are permitted on leads only in the Lake Elizabeth Camping Area and the Lake Elizabeth Day Visitor Area and its adjoining walking tracks.

Dogs are permitted in all areas of Otway Forest Park.

Be prepared and stay safe

Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park are in the South West and Central fire district. Bushfire and severe weather safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season or severe weather such as strong winds needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at www.emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days. However, gas stoves may be used under certain conditions for food preparation. Be aware that strong winds can occur anytime, which can be hazardous with falling timbers on walking tracks.

On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days and days of severe weather this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.

