

Lake Barrington



Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of TOURISM, PARKS
HERITAGE and the ARTS

Picturesque Lake Barrington lies nestled at the base of the Forth River valley approximately 40 km south of Devonport. An artificial lake, it was created by building the 84 m high Devils Gate Dam on the Forth River for hydro-electric power production in 1969. The lake is 20 km long and provides an international standard rowing course with comprehensive competitor and spectator facilities. The course is used for rowing, skiing and canoeing competitions.

This runny lava changed the existing drainage, which at the time consisted of only one watercourse, known as the Lorinna Lead. The Forth and Mersey rivers were developed by the formation of a low dividing ridge of basalt formed from the lava. The fertile chocolate brown soils, characteristic of the northwest of the state, were later formed from the weathering of the basalt.

The Forth river valley, being so deeply cut by ancient river action and the influences of glacial meltwaters, drew the attention of engineers to its potential as an impoundment for hydro-electric purposes.



dogwood

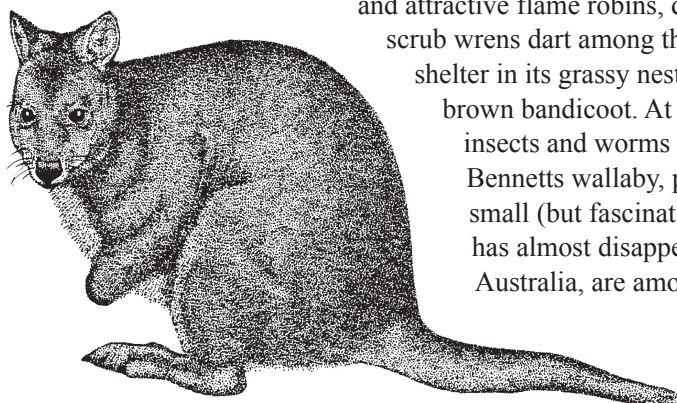
Flora and fauna

The Lake Barrington State Recreation Area is set in 183 hectares of the lake's foreshore. Steep hillsides are cloaked by a mixture of tall eucalypt and lush rainforest trees. Stringybark, swamp gum (the world's tallest flowering plant), white gum, black peppermint and white peppermint are among the gum trees adorning the hills. In gullies and shaded areas, leafy, moisture-loving plants such as the tree fern, blackwood, musk and dogwood abound; while cool, sheltered creek beds are festooned with fern species, including mother shield-fern and the distinctive lime green fish-bone fern. Cool, temperate rainforest species can also be seen in the reserve, including the stately myrtle, aromatic sassafras and the glossy foliage of the native laurel with its large creamy flowers unfolding in summer. Sunnier slopes have an understorey of bushes that include prickly beauty, guitar plant and prickly box.

Geology and landforms

The oldest rocks in this area date back some 550 million years and are represented by Barrington chert, a very hard, quartz-rich rock and the more common Gog Range greywacke — a dark rock which was formed on the slopes of an ancient marine environment. Some 470 million years ago, large river systems deposited rounded rocks and gravels which are clearly evident, both here and in the general area, in features such as Mt Roland. Following a long phase of erosion, about 20 million years ago a large quantity of basaltic lava was forced up through faults in the earth's surface.

The vegetation is home to a variety of birds such as Tasmania's endemic yellow-throated honeyeater and the raucous yellow-tailed black cockatoo. The small brown thornbill may be seen foraging in the foliage and attractive flame robins, dusky robins and scrub wrens dart among the trees. Taking shelter in its grassy nest during the day is the brown bandicoot. At night it digs for insects and worms in the softer soils. Bennetts wallaby, pademelon and the small (but fascinating) potoroo, which has almost disappeared from mainland Australia, are among the many forms of wildlife to be found.



pademelon

Getting there

Lake Barrington can be reached from either the east or west side of the lake. The major facilities and rowing course are on the eastern side and can only be reached via Sheffield and Cethana.

From Devonport, take the B13 or B14 to Sheffield and then the Kentish Road turnoff (C141) on Sheffield Town boundary. Along the Kentish Road follow the directional signs to Lake Barrington Rowing Course. If travelling from Launceston (approximately 1 1/2 hours drive) take the highway via Deloraine (C710) to Elizabeth Town. At Elizabeth Town take the road to Railton (B13) and turn off at either Kimberley or Railton (on B14) to Sheffield and then follow the directions out of Sheffield as above.

Things to do

Aquatic Activities

With your own equipment, Lake Barrington is ideal for a range of water sports including rowing, water skiing, power boating, canoeing and model yachting. There are launching ramps on both sides of the lake. It is necessary to book the rowing course with the ranger.

Swimming

On a hot summer day the deep waters of the lake are enticing. For safety's sake, swimmers should restrict themselves to areas near the shore. Swimmers should avoid the rowing course and the ski zone. The ski ramp is slippery to bare feet and, for safety reasons, swimming is prohibited.

Fishing

The lake contains black fish, rainbow trout and brown trout. Black fish are best caught from a boat in the evenings, and the trout by trolling, spinning and fly casting.



mothershield fern

What to bring

Weather conditions in Tasmania can change from driving rain to blazing sun all in one day. Any day can be pleasant when appropriately dressed. Wear layered clothing, including woollen socks and sturdy footwear. A waterproof jacket with hood is a must. Don't forget your hat and sunscreen.

Visitor facilities

There are extensive areas of lawn along the lake foreshores, as well as a large day visitor shelter with wood barbecues, seats and tables. Toilet facilities on the eastern side of the lake have wheelchair access.

Visitors are asked not to park on the grassed areas.

A kiosk operates on weekends throughout summer and during major sporting events.

Camping is not permitted.

Looking after State Recreation Areas

These reserves are established to provide areas of recreation and quiet relaxation as well as to maintain a refuge for native plant and animal communities.

We ask all visitors to take special care so that these areas remain pleasant places to visit and enjoy. Please:

- Be careful with fire. Use the fireplaces provided.
- Keep your dog on a lead.
- Place your rubbish in the bins provided.
- Remember that shooting, firearms and hunting equipment are prohibited.

Enjoy your visit and thank you for taking care.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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