

Gulf to Gregory: 2-3 Weeks Beginning 2 to 6 September, 2020

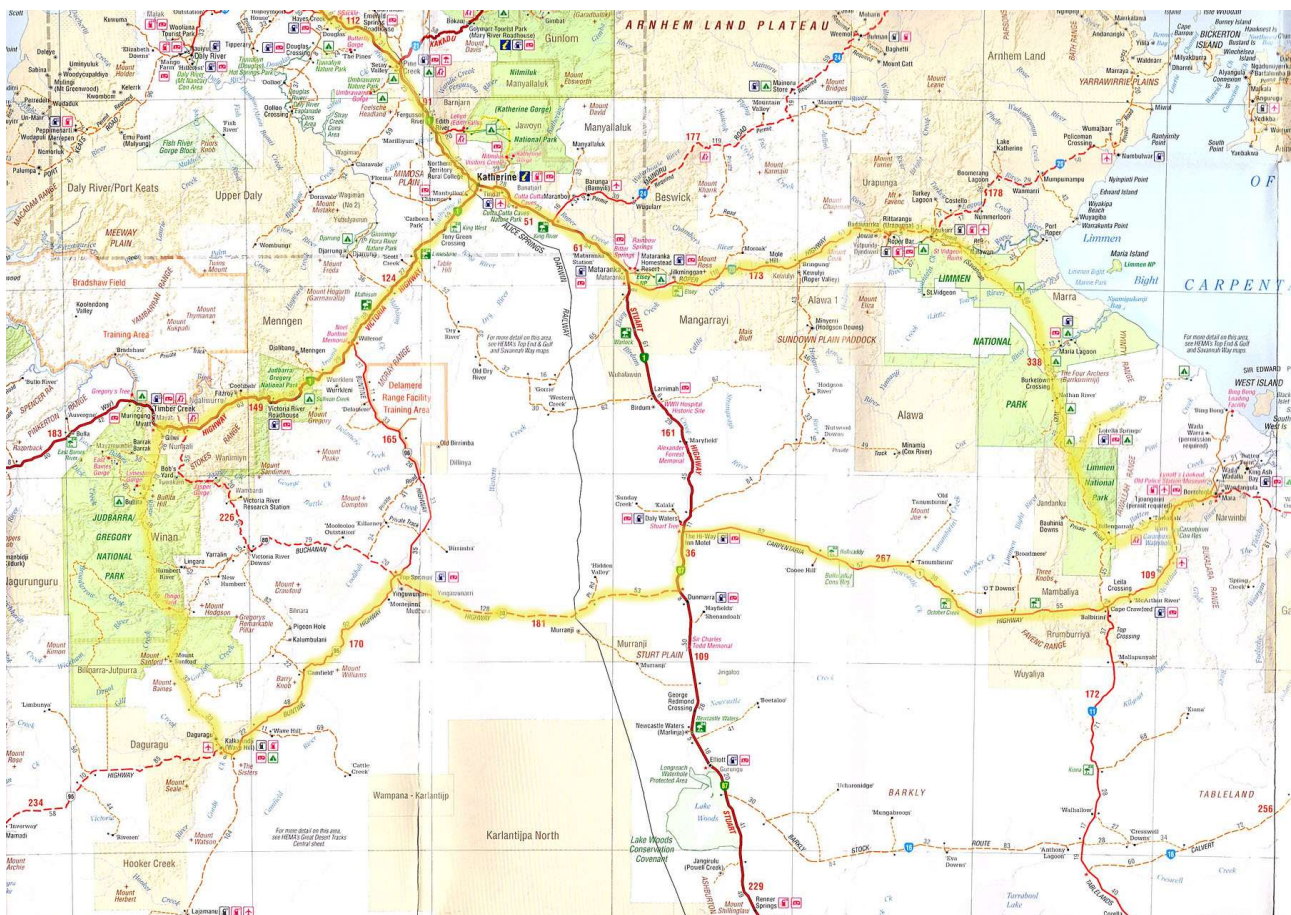
This trip replaced our Finke-Watarrka trip when we were unable to renew our Watarrka walk permission in time. It will be the first time we've done any of this since the 1990s. As such it is almost entirely exploratory.

List Price: Free

But No expenses are included.

You will have to pay camping and accommodation fees, a share of fuel, \$10 per evening meal cooked on the camping sections plus a share of 20 cents per km to cover some of the wear and tear on the vehicle or vehicles. Depending on how many nights we spend in accommodation and on your choices on those nights, our estimate of the total expenses is somewhere between \$700 and \$1000 per person. It was about \$800 on a similar trip to central Australia in 2017.

The yellow line on the map below shows our intended route. Darwin to Katherine is about 320 km.



We will leave Darwin on the first morning and drive south to Mataranka Hot Springs and/or Elsey National Park for a bit of a look around and a place to spend the night. The next day we continue to Roper Bar and take the track south into Limmen National Park and Lorella Springs (a private park). There are a number of marked day walks and a number of overnight walking possibilities. We will do as much as seems reasonable at the time. Both areas are known for amazing rock formations.

For more information on Limmen, see

<https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/find-a-park/find-a-park-to-visit/limmen-national-park>

The page has links to two fact sheets. If you plan to come on this trip, it's worth reading both.

Lorella Springs is a place I've been meaning to visit for some years. For more information see

<https://www.lorellasprings.com.au/>

From there, we turn south and east to the small town of Borrooloola. We used to offer walks along the Glyde River near the town but, I suspect, they are now part of the Macarthur River Mine site. If not, we might see if we can have a look.

Leaving Borrooloola, we head west to Cape Crawford where there is yet another 'Lost City'. There may or may not be a walk we can do there.

We continue west to the Stuart Highway, then south a short distance to Dunmarra. If we haven't had a night in accommodation for some time, we will almost certainly have one there as it would be the last chance for the next week to ten days.

From Dunmarra, it's back onto the Gravel west to Top Springs, then south west to Kalkarindji and the southern access to Judbarra / Gregory National Park. If we're more ambitious, we might go another 75 km and go in from there. There are definitely some long day walks possible and maybe some short overnight ones as well. For information on Gregory, see

<https://nt.gov.au/leisure/parks-reserves/find-a-park/find-a-park-to-visit/judbarra-gregory-national-park>

Eventually we hit the Victoria Highway near the tiny town of Timber Creek. We turn and head for home, stopping for a final night somewhere along the way.

Notes

We've never done this before so it is almost entirely exploratory. What we find may be used to create a new trip in 2021. It is never possible for us to be 100% sure what we will find in a particular place until we get there.

Water supplies are limited in many places. This late in the year, there is unlikely to be places to swim every day. There will be some. We'll know when we get there.

As a safety measure, it may be necessary to carry 2-3 litres per person on some walks.

Refillable wine bladders are a good way to carry extra water. They should be used as an addition to rather than as a replacement for your normal water bottles.

Centralian spinifex is particularly sharp and can penetrate most lightweight shoes. Strong boots and heavy gaiters are recommended.

On the walks, you will need to carry only what you need for that walk. Additional food and clothing can be left in the vehicle during the walks. Limited supplies are available at a few places along the way.

Terrain and difficulty – General

Overall Overall we rate this as level 3.

Climate Level 4. The table below from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology gives you a good idea of the possible variation during the month of September.

Place	Avg Max	Highest ever	Avg Min	Lowest ever	Avg rain	Most rain	Avg 9 AM Humidity	Avg 3 PM Humidity
Borrooloola	35.1°C	40.5°C	17.5°C	7.8°C	3.3 mm	37.8 mm	52%	28%
Victoria River Downs	35.7°C	40.7°C	18.1°C	5.5°C	4.3 mm	68.2 mm	39%	22%
Timber Creek	36.5°C	41.1°C	20.3°C	10.2°C	5.2 mm	32.4 mm	50%	25%

It's going to be hot but the humidity shouldn't be too bad.

Terrain	Almost anything is possible.
Vegetation	We don't expect much, if any thick scrub. As this is exploratory, we can't be 100% sure until it's over.
Hours	Generally 4-6 hours on the days we are walking. A few days might be longer.
Packs	Pack weight - level 2. You are unlikely to need to carry more than 3-4 days food at any one time. You need to bring both a sleeping bag and a tent. Although rain is unlikely, it is possible. You should bring rain gear. You can always leave things in the vehicle if you don't want to carry them on the walks. If conditions are not too dry, we should be able to use small campfires for cooking.
Art	Unknown.
Campsites	Often campgrounds, sometimes very primitive, sometimes well developed. What we find on overnight walks is unknown.
Swims	Swimming is almost certainly going to be possible some days but not on all days. There are a few places where saltwater crocs can be a problem so listen to the guide if he says no swimming.
Wildlife	Birds and lizards are always present but you are unlikely to see many large animals.
Fishing	Might be good somewhere in Limmen or near Borroloola. Little or none elsewhere.

Itinerary: Gulf to Gregory

Note 1	Day 0 is the day before departure
Note 2	This itinerary is subject to change.
Day 0	Pre-trip meeting at Todd Tavern at 6.30 p.m, outside weather permitting. This meeting is important. If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.
Day 1	8 a.m. pick up from your accommodation if you notified us where you are staying a week or more before departure or if you made other arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. Drive south. Campground or accom.
Day 2-x	Bush camping. Carrying full packs some days, day packs on others. Includes long drives in a 4WD vehicle some days.
Last day	Return to Darwin.
Final notes	<p>We can start any day between 2 & 6 September. Those who book early can help choose.</p> <p>We need at least two weeks and can go as long as three. How flexible we are with the finish date will be determined by those who book first.</p> <p>We will be using a manual transmission 4WD (or two of them) with forward facing seats. It is important that at least one person on the trip can share the driving.</p>