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Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park



About

Australia's largest salt lake, Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda has a catchment area from three states and the Northern Territory. The north lake itself is huge, covering an area 144km long and 77km wide, and at 15.2 metres below sea level, it is the lowest point in Australia. The south lake is 64km long and 24km wide. Flood waters cover the lake once every eight years on average. However, the lake has only filled to capacity three times in the last 160 years.

You may feel a sense of isolation standing on the dry lake edge and seeing nothing as far as the eye can see – yet with heavy rains and the right conditions the lake comes dramatically to life. When there's water in the lake, waterbirds descend in the thousands, including pelicans, silver gulls, red-necked avocets, banded stilts and gull-billed terns. It becomes a breeding site, teeming with species that are tolerant of salinity.

Away from the lake, the park features red sand dunes and mesas. They rise from salty claypans and stone-strewn tablelands.

Opening hours

Open daily.

Please note: Halligan Bay Point is closed from December 1 to March 15 each year, in line with the <u>Simpson Desert</u> (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/munga-thirri-simpson-desert-conservation-park-regional-reserve) annual summer closure.

Fire safety and information

Listen to your <u>local area radio station (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/public/download.jsp?id=104478)</u> for the latest updates and information on fire safety.

Check the <u>CFS website (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp)</u> or call the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline 1800 362 361 for:

- Information on fire bans and current fire danger ratings (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings.jsp)
- Current CFS warnings and incidents (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/warnings_and_incidents.jsp)
- Information on what to do in the event of a fire (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/prepare_for_a_fire.jsp)

Contact details

Visitor information and bookings

Port Augusta National Parks Wildlife Service South Australia office

Phone: (+61 8) 8648 5328

Email: (mailto:DEW.SAALParksAccommodation@sa.gov.au)DesertParks@sa.gov.au

(mailto:DesertParks@sa.gov.au)

Outback Roads Report

Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

Phone: 1300 361 033 (24-hour automated service)

Outback Road Warnings website (https://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads)

Park management:

Port Augusta National Parks Wildlife Service South Australia office

Phone: (+61 8) 8648 5300

 $Email: \ (mail to: DEW. SAAL Parks Accommodation@sa.gov. au) Desert Parks@sa.gov. au$

(mailto:DesertParks@sa.gov.au)

(mailto:DEW.AMLRGawlerOffice@sa.gov.au)Emergency contacts:

Medical, fire (including bushfire) and police emergency situations

Phone: Triple Zero - 000

Police Assistance

Phone: 131 444 for non-urgent police assistance

National Parks and Wildlife Service SA - After-hours duty officer

Phone: 0408 378 284

Injured wildlife:

Within the park

Please contact Port Augusta National Parks Wildlife Service South Australia office on (08) 8648 5300 or the afterhours duty officer on 0408 378 284.

Outside of the park

Please contact a local wildlife rescue group

When to visit

The best time to visit Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is between April and October. If summer monsoon rains provide floodwaters locally or from Queensland, you are more likely to see water in the lake during these cooler months. In summer, temperatures in the area can soar to more than 50 degrees Celsius.

Getting there

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is located 60km east of William Creek and 95km north-west of Marree. The park is accessible via two pastoral tracks, known as 'public access routes'. Both are suitable for 4WD vehicles only. You should travel in convoy and carry reserves of fuel, water and food. It is best to avoid travelling in the hotter months, from November to March.

From William Creek: Travel south-east on the Oodnadatta Track for 7km to the access track to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park. Travel along this track to Halligan Bay Point via Armistice Bore and ABC Bay. This public access route is closed from 1 December to 15 March.

From Marree: The access track turnoff is 3km west from Marree. The track runs 94km to Level Post Bay via Muloorina Station.

Check the latest <u>Desert Parks Bulletin (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/Desert-Parks-Bulletin-27-April-2021.pdf?mtime=20210427145150&focal=none)</u> and the <u>road condition report</u> (http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads) for current access before you leave.

• Park maps (#maps)

Facilities

Camp sites are available at Halligan Bay Point where toilets and two picnic shelters are provided, or at Muloorina Station's privately owned campground which includes toilet facilities.

Campgrounds with toilet and shower facilities are also located at Marree, William Creek, and at Coward Springs, 130 km west of Marree on the Oodnadatta Track.

Useful information

- There is no mobile phone coverage in the park.
- Check the latest <u>Desert Parks Bulletin (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/Desert-Parks-Bulletin-27-April-2021.pdf?mtime=20210427145150&focal=none)</u> and <u>road condition report</u> (http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads) for current access information before you leave
- Download the <u>Oodnadatta Track visitor brochure and the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks visitor brochure.</u> (http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands/news/publications-archive/exploring-the-outback)
- Take a look at <u>Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre from the air</u>
 (http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2016/07/kati-thanda-lake-eyre) as featured on the Good Living blog.
- Explore what other <u>nature and outdoor activities (https://southaustralia.com/places-to-go/flinders-ranges-and-outback/things-to-do/nature-and-outdoor)</u> are available in this area on the South Australia Tourism website.
- $\bullet \ \ \, \underline{\textbf{Remote area travel information (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/coorong-national-park/psagen-remote-area-travel-information-brochure.pdf?mtime=20210114074340\&focal=none)} \\$
- Parks management plans (https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/park-management/state-wide-park-strategies/park-management-plans)
- Trails SA (http://www.southaustraliantrails.com/)
- SA Marine Parks (https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/marineparks/home)

Outback Road Report

1300 361 033 (24-hour automated service)

Northern and Western South Australian Outback Roads Temporary Closures, Restrictions and Warnings Report (http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads)

• Important: Collection of firewood within National Parks is prohibited. Dead wood plays a vital role in providing shelter for animals and adding nutrients to the soil.

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are permitted in most public places and are therefore welcome in South Australia's parks and reserves. Assistance dogs must be appropriately restrained on a lead and remain under your effective control at all times while in a park or reserve.

As per the dogs in parks and reserves policy, if the dog is not an accredited assistance dog, they must be trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate that disability and meet standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for a dog in a public place. However, refusal may be given if the person with the disability is unable to produce evidence the dog is an assistance dog with the appropriate training.

Before taking your assistance dog into a park that does not normally allow dogs, it is highly recommended that you contact us so we can provide you with the latest information on any potential hazards within specific parks that may affect your dog. Please contact the park via the contact details provided under the contact tab or contact the visitor service centre via <a href="mailto:emai

Plants and animals

Plants

Vegetation is generally sparse in the park. Canegrass and scattered clumps of mulga and acacias grow on the red sand dunes and the occasional stand of acacia can be seen on the coarse gibber tablelands. Nitre-bush, samphire, needlebush and native willow are also found in the Lake Eyre area. After heavy local rain the landscape bursts into colour and is surrounded by a sea of grass-green foliage. The flowers produce an abundance of nectar and seeds that attract many insects and in turn, flocks of birds.

After heavy local rain the area becomes a blaze of living colour edged by verdant green. When these plants burst into flower, their nectar and seed attract insects and birds.

Animals

Generations of desert animals have had to adapt in order to survive in the harsh environment of Kati Thanda such as the Lake Eyre dragon. This lizard lives out on the dry lakebed eating ants and sheltering under the salt crust on the deep mud layer.

If you are lucky enough to visit during a flood you may witness the lake hosting a chaotic community of breeding birds that have flown thousands of kilometres from as far away as China and Japan.

Under the waterline, bony bream and hardyhead, shrimp and perch all begin their own breeding and feeding frenzies as water fills the lake. The Lake Eyre hardyhead can survive in water up to 15 times saltier than seawater so it can continue feeding and breeding as the other fish around it succumb to the salty water as the fresh water evaporates.

Flora and fauna species lists

To download flora (plants) and fauna (animals) species lists for this park, use the 'Create Simple Species List' tab under 'Flora Tools' or 'Fauna Tools' in NatureMaps (https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/NatureMaps/Pages/default.aspx).

Dogs not allowed

Dogs are not permitted in this park.

Discover which parks you can walk your dog in on our <u>find a park (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/find-a-park)</u> tool or read <u>12 dog-friendly walks in Adelaide Parks (http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2017/12/dogs-part-2)</u> by Good Living for inspiration.

Traditional owners

Kati Thanda is a very special place to everyone who bears witness to it, particularly the Arabana and the Dieri People. Aboriginal people have been living around Kati Thanda for thousands of years, and it plays a central role in many of their stories and songs. This park is co-managed by an Advisory Committee, comprising members of the Arabana people and representatives of the South Australian Government.

Co-naming

Lake Eyre National Park is now formally known as Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park after a request through the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee. The Arabana Parks Advisory Committee is a partnership initiated in June 2012 between the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to share responsibility for the management of the Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park.

Words from the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee

We welcome visitors to our traditional lands and encourage them to learn about our stories and culture. In this area, visitor numbers vary greatly from about 5,000 in a dry year and soar to around 25,000 in a flood event year. We seek to establish culturally appropriate ways for people to experience the parks, in particular the waters and lake bed of Kati Thanda and the mound springs of the area, which have high conservation and cultural values, and are sensitive to visitor impacts.

See and do

Rangers recommend

We have picked the brains of our park rangers to find out what they would recommend you see and do whilst visiting this park.

- Seeing the vast lake by air (book a flight from one of the neighbouring towns).
- Lying in your swag at night, seeing the stars as you never have before.
- Photographing the spectacular lake and desert country at sunrise and sunset.

Bushwalking

There are no specific bushwalking trails within this park.

Please note: The Arabana people ask that visitors do not walk on the lake due to its cultural significance.

Stay in the park

Camping

Experience the awe-inspiring stark wilderness of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park at night by setting up camp.

Halligan Bay Point

Located on the shores of the lake this is an exposed, flat campground with limited facilities – two toilets and two picnic shelters. However, if there is water in the lake, it can feel like beach camping.

Muloorina Station

There is also campsites available at Muloorina Station, fees apply.

- Camping fees and booking information (#fees)
- Camping safety (#safety)

Other campgrounds

Campgrounds with toilet and shower facilities are also located at Marree, William Creek, and at Coward Springs, 130 km west of Marree on the Oodnadatta Track.

Mountain biking

There are no designated mountain biking trails in this park.

• Which parks can you ride in? (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/know-before-you-go/mountain-biking)

Scenic flights

The best way to see Kati Thanda and take in its vastness is from the air. Scheduled scenic flights provide spectacular views across the park and showcase the seasonal wildlife.

A flight over the lake when there is water is an extraordinary sight. This huge lake attracts birds from thousands of kilometres away – how they know there will be a feast for them on arrival remains a mystery.

Lake Eyre Basin

The Lake Eyre Basin is one of the biggest internal drainage systems in the world, extending across the south east of the Northern Territory, south west Queensland, north west New South Wales and north east South Australia. The basin is equal in size to the area of South Australia and overlies most of the Great Artesian Basin. The floodwaters that flow into the lake are the result of high monsoon rainfall that usually falls over south west Oueensland.

Each time the lake floods, the salt crust which forms much of the surface of the lake begins to dissolve until the salt level in the water reaches saturation point. When the lake starts to fill, the surface water is fairly fresh and drinkable because the heavier salty water is close to the lake bottom. From the air, water salinity variations can be seen as remarkable swirling current patterns.

Take a look at Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre from the air

(http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2016/07/kati-thanda-lake-eyre) as featured on the Good Living blog.

Volunteering

Want to help?

To find out how you can help in this park or nearby, please visit <u>Natural Resources Adelaide South Australian Arid</u> Lands – Volunteering. (https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/get-involved/volunteering)

Want to join others and become a Park Friend?

To find out more about Friends of Parks groups please visit <u>Friends of Parks South Australia.</u> (http://www.friendsofparkssa.org.au/members-list)

You could join others to help look after a park. You can take part in working bees, training and other events.

Safety

Camping

When camping in a National Park, it's important to remember the following:

- Always let someone responsible know your travel plans, especially when travelling in remote areas. It's a good idea to let them know when you expect to return.
- Check the weather forecast before you leave, including overnight temperatures on the <u>Bureau of Meteorology</u> (http://www.bom.gov.au/sa/). Even during very mild weather, the nights can get very cold.
- The quality and quantity of water cannot be guaranteed within parks. Please bring plenty of water and food to be self-sufficient.
- Always camp in designated sites (where applicable) do not camp beneath trees with overhanging branches, as they can drop without warning. It's also a good idea to check that there are no insect nests nearby.
- Check to make sure you're not camping in a natural waterway, flash floods can happen anytime.
- If camp fires are permitted, you must bring your own firewood, as the collection of firewood within National Parks is prohibited. Extinguish your camp fire with water (not sand or dirt) until the hissing sound stops.
- Ensure that you are familiar with the <u>fire restrictions (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/know-before-you-go/fires-and-bbqs)</u> for this park.

Fire

Can I have a fire or barbecue?

- Wood fires and solid fuel fires are prohibited throughout the year.
- Gas fires and liquid fuel fires are permitted, other than on days of total fire ban.
- Ensure you are familiar with the <u>fire restrictions</u>
 (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/dew_park_fire_restrictions_2020_to_2021.pdf?mtime=20210401165249
 for this park.

Fire safety and information

Listen to your <u>local area radio station (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/public/download.jsp?id=104478)</u> for the latest updates and information on fire safety.

Check the CFS website (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp) or call the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline 1800

362 361 for:

- Information on fire bans and current fire danger ratings (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/bans_and_ratings.jsp)
- Current CFS warnings and incidents (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/warnings_and_incidents.jsp)
- Information on what to do in the event of a fire (https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/prepare for a fire.jsp)

4WD

This park is 4WD accessible only. Up-to-date road conditions can be checked via the far northern and western road report or the parks office.

Far northern and western road report phone: 1300 361 033 Desert Parks Administration Officer phone: (+61 8) 8648 5328

You are responsible for your own safety. Before travelling through remote outback areas of Australia, ensure you notify a responsible person of your itinerary and expected date and time of return.

Outback safety

- Before you leave home ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy and that you are carrying appropriate spare parts foremost contingencies including a strong jack, and if possible, two spare wheels.
- Carry adequate supplies of fuel, food and water in case of stranding.
- Use only public access routes and designated camping areas.
- Carry a satellite phone or an HF radio. Normal mobile phones do not work in most outback areas. It is also a good idea to carry an EPIRB.
- Do not leave your vehicle in the event of a breakdown.
- Check the conditions of outback roads before leaving the nearest major town.
- Take note of where petrol stations are enroute and their hours of operation.
- Take frequent rest breaks and change drivers regularly.
- Obey road closure signs and remain on main roads. Substantial fines apply for travelling off track. Deviating from the roads can create tyre marks that last for decades.
- Do not drive on the lake. The seemingly hard surface can often hide soft mud underneath making it easy to get stuck, but hard to get out of.
- Download the <u>Oodnadatta Track visitor brochure and the Birdsvill and Strzelecki Tracks visitor brochure.</u> (http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands/news/publications-archive/exploring-the-outback)

Public Access Routes (PARs)

- Public access routes are established under the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 to provide public access over pastoral land without the need for travellers to ask permission from the lessee.
- · Public access routes are not roads or part of the formal road network. They are unimproved and unsurfaced dirt

tracks intended to provide four wheel drive access in dry conditions only

• For further information see - <u>Public access routes to pastoral land in South Australia.</u>

(http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/files/sharedassets/sa_arid_lands/land/rangelands-public-access-routes-fact.pdf)

Know before you go

The Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is part of a harsh, desert environment. The summer heat can be dangerous, and rain can quickly change the environment making the terrain difficult to navigate. For current access and road condition information, see the latest <u>Desert Parks Bulletin</u> (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/Desert-Parks-Bulletin-27-April-

2021.pdf?mtime=20210427145150&focal=none).

Although the Arabana people prefer that no-one walks on the lake because of their spiritual beliefs, walking on the lake's edge is permitted providing that the local environment is not damaged.

Every park is different. Each has its own challenging environment and it is important to understand how to stay safe while enjoying all the park has to offer.

Please:

- leave your pets at home
- respect the lake do not drive upon it
- do not feed or disturb animals (especially dingoes) or remove native plants
- ensure your 4WD is fully prepared with adequate spares, supplies, water and emergency provisions, and know how to fully operate your vehicle
- bring a satellite phone, EPIRB and/or UHF radio
- do not leave the designated tracks in your vehicle
- maintain the 40km/h speed limit within the park the Public Access Routes leading to the park have a 60km/h speed limit.
- take your rubbish with you
- only use generators during daylight hours.

Dingo safety

To remain safe and to keep dingoes wild, please:

- ensure you store rubbish, food, shoes and leather items securely
- do not feed the dingoes they are naturally lean animals
- always stay close to your children
- do not encourage, excite, or run away from dingoes

• if you are attacked, aggressively defend yourself.	

Maps

Park maps

• <u>Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park map (https://d35s2bz2fw949f.cloudfront.net/parks/docs/kati-thanda-lake-eyre-national-park/kati-thanda-lake-eyre-national-park-park-map.pdf?mtime=20210114074356&focal=none)</u>

Campground maps

• <u>Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park (including Halligan Bay Point Campground) map</u>
df?mtime=20210114074356&focal=none)

Maps on your mobile

If you have a smartphone or tablet you can download the free <u>Avenza Map app</u>
(https://www.avenzamaps.com/maps/how-it-works.html) and have interactive national park maps on hand when you need them.

The app uses your device's built-in GPS to plot your real-time location within the park onto a map. The app can be used without a network connection and without roaming charges. You can also measure area and distance, plot photos and drop placemark pins.

How to get it working on your device:

- 1. Download the Avenza Maps app from the app store (\underline{iOS} (https://apps.apple.com/au/app/avenza-maps/id388424049)/Android (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.Avenza&hl=en_AU)) whilst you are still in range (its free!).
- 2. Open up the app and click the shopping cart icon.
- 3. Click 'Find' and type the name of the national park or reserve you are looking for.
- 4. Click on the map you are after and install it (all our maps are free).
- 5. You will now find a list of your installed maps on the home page of the Avenza Maps app.
- 6. Use our maps through the Avenza Mapa app while in the park and never take a wrong turn again.

Fees

Entry fees

Please book and pay online for vehicle entry and camping prior to arrival as self-registration stations are no longer available in this park.

- Book before you go (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/kati-thanda-lake-eyre-national-park/booking/vehicle-entry-fees)
- FAQs about booking online (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/frequently-asked-questions)

Where can I book and pay in person?

If you are unable to book and pay online you can do so, in person, at these <u>booking agents</u> (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/where-can-i-book) across the state.

For online bookings enquiries please email:

DEWDesertParks@sa.gov.au (mailto:DEWDesertParks@sa.gov.au)

Camping and accommodation

Halligan Bay Point

Please book and pay online for vehicle entry and camping prior to arrival as self-registration stations are no longer available in this park.

- Book before you go (/booking#Kati%20Thanda-Lake%20Eyre%20National%20Park)
- FAQs about booking online (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/frequently-asked-questions)

Where can I book and pay in person?

If you are unable to book and pay online you can do so, in person, at these <u>booking agents</u> (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/where-can-i-book) across the state.

For online bookings enquiries please email:

DEWDesertParks@sa.gov.au (mailto:DEWDesertParks@sa.gov.au)

Muloorina

The camping available at Muloorina is a privately run campground and separate fees apply.

Park pass

Desert Park Pass

Heading to the outback? Purchase a Desert Parks Pass which entitles you to 12 months vehicle entry into seven desert parks.

The pass also allows you to camp for periods of up to 21 nights at a time in the desert parks (excluding Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park, where camping is not permitted).

The Desert Parks Pass is mandatory if you're planning to travel into Munga-Thirri—Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Regional Reserve or are travelling east of Dalhousie Springs in Witjira National Park. <u>Day vehicle entry</u> and camping (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/book-now) is available for all other Desert Parks.

- Buy a Desert Parks Pass now (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/parks-passes/park-passes-online)
- Buy a Desert Parks Pass in person (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/where-can-i-book)
- Park Pass FAQs (https://www.parks.sa.gov.au/book-and-pay/frequently-asked-questions#park-pass-faqs)

Other fees and permits

Boating is currently not permitted on Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda.