

Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park



Horse riding in the Otway parks

Horse riding is a popular activity and a great way to explore and enjoy the region. These notes should be read in conjunction with the Horse Trail Riding Adventure Activity Standards, and a good detailed map of the parks and surrounding area. Planning will ensure an enjoyable, safe riding experience.



Where can I ride?

A wide range of roads and tracks are available in the Great Otway National Park (see table over page). The Otway Forest Park allows horse riding on all formed roads and tracks. Wet weather may impact choices.

Seasonal Road Closures apply to horses in both parks. For details and a map showing choices, call Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Popular park areas for horse riding are Bambra, Deans Marsh, Barwon Downs, Barongarook and Forrest.

The Barongarook areas provide a number of wide, slashed roadsides suitable for horse riding. The cleared fuel breaks beside **Benwerrin-Mt Sabine Road, Garvey Track, Kaanglang Road, Delaneys Road** and **Mt Cowley Track** also permit horse riding.

Planning your ride

When riding, especially in large groups, be aware of other park users; they may be disturbed or frightened by horses and your horse may also be startled by sudden vehicle noise and wildlife. Park staff can assist you with ride planning and advice.

Do I need a permit?

A permit is required if an organised event is planned with multiple riders. A permit is generally not required for horse camping/riding in permitted sections of the parks.

Keep to the tracks and roads to avoid damaging the environment. Browsing and trampling vegetation can cause soil degradation, erosion and spread of disease.

Be mindful that horses can introduce and spread weeds in fodder and manure, and soil-borne diseases in soil on hooves.

Horse riders must take reasonable steps to ensure horse manure does not remain in the park.



Camping with your horse

Otway Forest Park accommodates camping with horses at **Dandos, Goat Track, Stevensons Falls and Tanner Road** camping areas. Support vehicles are only permitted on roads open for public use. **Goat Track Camping Area** is small and subject to closure in wet weather. **Tanners Road Camping Area** shares with trail-bike riders

When camping with horses ensure they are held at least 30m from campsites and streams and washed away from streams and aqueducts.

Water needs to be carted from rivers to tethered horses as no yards are provided. Horse-float parking space is available at campgrounds in the Forest Park.

Tour operators

A number of licensed tour operators provide nature-based horse riding experiences in parks of the Otways and also on private land. Some also run horse-drawn caravan tours.

Contact the Apollo Bay, Colac or Lorne Visitor Information Centres for tour operators in the area.

Beach riding access

You can ride your horse on selected beaches along the coast at Fairhaven, Johanna and Princetown - but not during school holidays.

At Johanna and Princetown beach riding is permitted **1 April to 30 August**. Elsewhere tide times and beach dwelling bird-nesting seasons affect your ride-planning. Horse riding is not permitted any other time of the year to protect breeding beach-nesting birds; particularly the shy endangered Hooded Plover.

When riding in these areas please ensure you,
- keep below the high water mark,
- as close to the water's edge as is safe to do so,
- timed to coincide within two hours of low tide.

Princetown beach access is through the sand dunes following the top track from the car park. Please avoid horse riding along the estuary water line and edge of the channel to the mouth.

Johanna Beach access is only via the track at the eastern end of Johanna carpark.

View the Horse Trail Riding Adventure Activity Standards here

www.outdoorsvictoria.org.au/activity_standardsdownload.php

ROADS AVAILABLE FOR HORSE RIDING - GONP

Allenvale Road 5B
Bald Hills Road 5C-
*Big Hill Track 5D
*Birds Track 5E
Blanket Bay Road 5C
*Boggy Creek Track 5E
*Bunker Hill Track 5D
Colac Tree Road 5D
*Coopers No. 2 Track 5E
Cricket Pitch Road 5C
*Denham Track 5D
*Dunse Track 5E
Elliot Road (Parker Spur Road to Snowy Ridge Track)
(MVO) 5E
Fairhaven Ridge Track (MVO) 5E
*Five Mile Track 5E
*Garvey Track 5E
*Gentle Annie Track 5E
*Godfrey Track 5E
Grey River Road 5C
*Hayden Road 5E
*Jamieson Track 5E
*Kennett Road 5D
*Kennett-Wye Jeep Track 5E
*Loves Track 5E
*Moggs Creek Track 5E
Moonlight Head Road 5C
Mt Cowley Track 5E
Mt McKenzie Road including western section 5D
*Newcombe Spur Track 5E
No. 2 Road 5D
*Old Carlisle Track 5D
Parker Spur Road (MVO) 5D
Parkes Lodge Road 5E
*Peppermint Parade 5D
Pipeline Road (East) 5D
Princetown Beach – Gravel Road (MVO) 5D
*Rapier Ridge Track 5D
Rifle Range Track 5E
*Sharps Track 5D
*Sheepyard Track 5D
*Skinner Creek Track 5E
Snowy Ridge Track (MVO) 5D
The Gable Track (MVO) 5C
*Thompson Track 5D
Tucker Orchard Road 5C
*Upper Sheepyard Track 5D
Wreck Beach Track (MVO) 5C
*Wye River Road (Curtis Track to Mt Sabine Rd) 5D
*Wye River Road (GOR to Curtis Track) 5C
*Wye Track 5E
Track to Yarringa Road (MVO) 5D
Area bounded by Forrest, Portreath & Gundrys Rds
(MVO) 5E

Key to track classifications

MVO - Management Vehicle Only track
5B All-weather, two-lane formed and gravelled or single-lane sealed with gravel shoulders.
5C Generally an all-weather, single lane two-way unsealed formed road, usually lightly gravelled.
5D Substantially single lane, two-way, generally dry weather formed (natural materials) track/road.
5E Predominantly single-lane, two-way earth tracks (unformed) at or near the natural surface level.

Horse riding can be a great experience in the parks. Please ensure you prepare and stay safe.

- Please ride safely and wear a helmet at all times.
- For your own safety do not ride on days of **Total Fire Ban** or high fire danger.
- A good quality map should always be carried.
- Plan your ride. Always let someone know where you are going and when you intend to return
- To prevent soil erosion, weeds and other problems, it is important you stay on the trails, heed signposts and avoid short cuts.
- The parks are full of wildlife, try not to disturb them and be aware of snakes.
- Mobile phone reception is limited and cannot be guaranteed.
- Be aware days of high wind or heavy rain can increase the risk of falling limbs and trees.
- Always be considerate of other park users.
- Leave no trace: if you've carried it in, carry it out.

Be fire ready and stay safe

Many parks and forests are located in high fire risk areas. On days of forecast Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety. If you are already in the park you should leave the night before or early in the morning for your own safety.

Closure signs will be erected and rangers will patrol when possible, however you may not receive a personal warning that the park is closed so check the latest conditions by calling **13 1963** or visit

www.parks.vic.gov.au

For up to date information on fires in Victoria or general fire safety advice call the

Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Fire

Fires may only be lit in fireplaces provided.

No fires/flames, (including gas or fuel stoves/lanterns in tents) may be lit on days of **Total Fire Ban**.

The Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park are in the **South West Total Fire Ban Districts**.

It is your responsibility to know if it is a day of Total Fire Ban.

Park closures

Be prepared to leave early as **extreme weather may cause the closure of some park areas** for public safety.