

WALK DETAILS

5.5 kilometres - Return
3 to 4 hours
easy walking, firm, some sand

The Malleefowl walk commences approximately 9 kilometres east of the Visitor Centre along Track 8. Look for the signs on the southern side of Track 8 just before its intersection with the management track along the Birdseye Block boundary.

It follows, for the most part, an old station track that has become partially overgrown. The walk is marked with posts and blue triangular reflectors. Seats are provided at the Malleefowl mound, at the mid-point of the walk and within the *Callitris* (Native pine) woodland at the southern end. Upon reaching this mid-point, you can either retrace your steps or return along the nearby management vehicle track. You will pass through Mallee with *Triodia scariosa* (Porcupine grass) understorey growing on sand. Animal tracks are usually visible on the sand. Look out for Striated Grasswrens in the *Triodia*.

THIS WALK IS HABITAT FOR

Malleefowl, Striated Grasswrens, Emus, Black-eared Miners, Southern Scrub-robins, and Honeyeaters when mallee is flowering.

IF YOU BECOME LOST ON THIS WALK

walk east to intercept the management vehicle track, or walk north to Track 8.

THE CALLITRIS SPECIES ON GLUEPOT

Two species of Native Pine are growing on Gluepot. The largest is the Southern cypress pine, *Callitris gracilis* which can be recognised by its relatively large and smooth cones. It grows mostly on the gypsum sand dunes in the eastern parts of Gluepot.

A smaller bushy shrub with warty cones is likely to be the Shrubby cypress pine, *Callitris verrucosa*. Illustrations below are life-sized.



C. gracilis



C. verrucosa

SAFETY GUIDELINES

A few simple precautions should always be taken when walking at Gluepot.

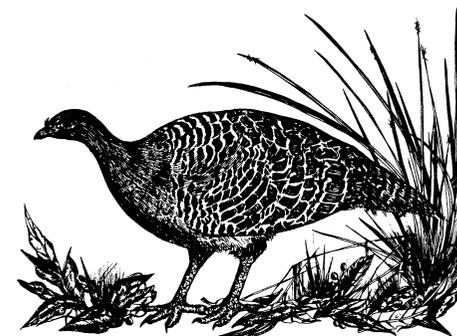
De-hydration is always a real risk as the temperature can get extremely high (over 45°C), and humidity is normally very low.

- **Carry sufficient water**
- **Protect yourself from the sun**
- **If on a long walk take at least one piece of warm clothing**
- **Carry a compass & plan or map**
- **Carry a snake bite kit.**

W1

MALLEEFOWL WALK

Malleefowl mound *Callitris* woodland



Malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata*

GLUEPOT RESERVE
WALKING TRACK NETWORK
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THE MALLEEFOWL WALK

Map NOT to Scale

TRACK 8

car park



0.4 km

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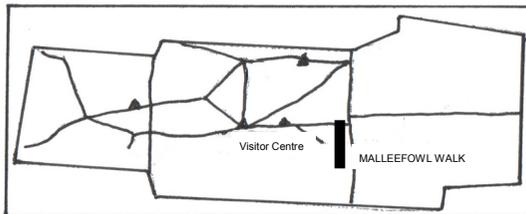
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S	seat
+	malleefowl mound
- - -	walking track

RETURN ALONG WALKING
TRACK OR VIA
THE MANAGEMENT VEHICLE
TRACK

2.5 km

MANAGEMENT TRACK (walkers only)



THE MALLEEFOWL

The Malleefowl, *Leipoa ocellata*, is vulnerable in Australia. It was once widespread over the arid southern part of the continent but is now confined to larger stands of Mallee. Gluepot has a strong resident population of these birds and the many mounds are proof of their breeding success. Foxes, goats and rabbits have been cited as threats to Malleefowl in various places. Foxes are direct predators, taking adult and young birds, and eggs from the mounds. Rabbits and goats compete for food with the newly hatched chicks that need plenty of high-energy foods to survive their early development period. Foxes are subject to a rigorous control program on Gluepot and surrounding properties, and rabbits and goats are now reduced in numbers, so Malleefowl have a secure future on the reserve.

The male Malleefowl builds one or more nesting mounds in autumn and leaves the top open like a crater. The mounds may

reach two metres in height and five in diameter after a number of seasons. Hens select the mound they wish to use for egg-laying in the coming season and the male then abandons any other mounds in his territory (unless a different hen has selected another as well!) and continues working the one chosen. He then fills the egg chamber and centre of the mound with leaf litter but leaves it open to allow winter rain to wet it thoroughly. Once sufficiently wet, the mound is closed to allow composting and heat generation to start. In spring the hen usually lays between 15 and 24 eggs (although between five and 33 have been recorded) as the male periodically opens the mound to the egg-chamber for her. Each egg is approximately 10 percent of her body weight, so high-energy foods need to be on hand! While the eggs are incubating the male bird maintains a relatively constant temperature within the mound by testing the temperature with his beak, and removing or adding sand during the day as required to control it. Generally sand is removed in the morning and added in the evenings.

The eggs hatch after about 50 days of incubation in the mound. The hatchlings have no contact with their parents except being able to hear some vocalisations during hatching and emergence. They disperse quickly into the surrounding scrub. The presence of an immediately available high-energy food supply is one of the main limitations to their early survival.

MALLEEFOWL ON GLUEPOT

Seven Malleefowl monitoring grids have been surveyed and marked on Gluepot. Each is a one by two kilometre grid with yellow posts marking every 200m intersection and grid reflectors at every 25m. Malleefowl mounds are then surveyed using the grid as a reference. Details such as annual use and stage of nesting will be regularly recorded on each grid. This will provide useful population data about the birds.

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