

Jump Up Loop Road

Sturt National Park



The 'Jump Up' loop road takes you through stony rolling downs, dry creek flats and mesa country: typical of the eastern part of Sturt National Park. The 110km round trip from Tibooburra via Olive Downs and the Silver City Highway takes 3-hours. If you have a spare couple of hours, we recommend you take the 'Jump Up' walk from Olive Downs campground.

Along this tour route you will pass through the Twelve-Mile Creek catchment area into rolling downs/gibber plains country before ascending the majestic 'jump ups'. Take time to explore the dry creek lines, bird watch at South Myers Tank, or see the spectacular view at the 'Jump Up' Lookout.

1 LANDSCAPES

The arid climate of Sturt National Park has contributed to the geological formation of a variety of distinct landscapes. From this point it is possible to see a number of them. To the south you can see the *Granites*: a chain of granite boulders in which the township of Tibooburra is nestled. Dating back to the Silurian age (400-450 million years) they are the oldest rock formations in the park. To the east and north-east you can see the Mt. Wood Hills (an outlying part of the Grey Range, which extends into Queensland). Finally, to the north-west you can see the Grey Range and the 'Jump Up' country. Further along, Sth Meyers tank has a bird hide. Ducks and Grebes are often on the water here. Wrens may be darting among the saltbush and zebra finch sheltering in the lignum.

2 CREEK LIFE

Cutting through these stony downs are many ephemeral creeks, meaning they flow only when it rains. An example of this type of waterway is the creek lined with trees to your right. This is Twelve-Mile Creek; the major watercourse in the park. Its catchment is quite vast, filling from its upper reaches near Mt. Sturt, through the park into Mt. Wood Gorge then out

of the park into the Bullagree Swamp: part of the Bulloo Overflow (an area explored by Burke and Wills in the 1860's). All the creeks you cross on this drive flow into the Twelve Mile Ck system.

Notice the change in vegetation between the stony rolling downs and the dry creek lines. The downs are typically covered in smaller species including Mitchell grass, copperburr and saltbush. The creeks are typically lined with Eucalypt species including River Red Gum, Coolabah and Black Box. Wet or dry, the creek lines in the park shelter a wonderful variety of birds. A keen eye and some patience may reward you with sightings of eagles, woodswallows, falcons, honeyeaters or a variety of parrots.

3 FORMER MOUNT KING STATION

This is the site of Mt. King Station. In the late 1970's the homestead and shearing shed were dismantled. So, only a few ruins remain. The old homestead stood on the left. The rectangular metal structure on the hill was the water tank for the homestead. On the right you can see the remains of the shearing shed. Mt. King station originally covered an area of 26840 acres. In 1972 it was the first of the area stations to become part of Sturt National Park. The drive between Mt. King station and Stubberfield's tank follows an old stock route that ran beside Connia Creek.



4 JUMP UP COUNTRY

Here at Connia Creek you have a good view of the 'Jump Ups': aptly named for the way these hills jump up from the surrounding downs. They include the Mt. Wood Hills and the southern end of the Grey Range.

100million years ago the park was part of an inland sea. About 25mya what is now the hard silcrete crust of the Jump Ups was laid down in what was then valleys and depressions. Since then, the surrounding country eroded, but the harder silcrete remained and somewhat protected the softer rocks underneath, leaving the hard-capped Jump Ups you see today.

If you have some time, wander along the creek bed, look for birds and enjoy the view of the 'jump ups'.

At Connia Creek the vegetation includes River Red Gum, Saltbush, Ruby Saltbush, Bluebush, Hakea, Copperburr, and a variety of Acacia species.

5 MESAS IN DETAIL

Here at the foot of the 'jump ups' you can see the layering and structure of these flat-topped mesas and isolated, rounded cuertas. Over time the edges of the hills have been weathered away. This rock has been broken down to create the stony rolling downs seen at the base of the 'jump ups'. To your right you can see how the weathering process occurs. On top of the hills there is a layer of sandstone, conglomerate and siltstone that has been slowly transformed into a hard crust called silcrete (or duricrust). Underneath the silcrete you can see a 'mottled layer' and below this a 'pallid layer'. (The white chalky layer consists of single celled phytoplankton and diatoms that have built up on the floor of the shallow inland sea.) Both of these layers are less resistant to weathering and are eroded away faster than the top silcrete layer. Eventually the silcrete crust is undermined and it crumbles away due to the lack of support.

Once you have driven to the top of the 'jump ups' don't forget to stop at the lookout for a wonderful view of the 'jump up' region and the stony rolling downs.



6 OLIVE DOWNS

Olive Downs campground is a great place to stop for a break. There are toilet facilities, tap-water (untreated) and free gas BBQ's plates and stove-tops. From here you can walk the 'jump up' track – a 3.5km return walk that is well worth the effort, or a shorter walk that starts in the same place. When you leave the campground and continue your drive you will quickly come across Olive Downs shearing shed (on the right) and homestead (further up on left). Olive Downs is one of the oldest stations in the area, dating back to the 1860's. It remained a station until 1973 when the NSW government purchased it to become part of Sturt National Park.

Turn right at the shearing shed to continue the loop drive back to the Silver City Highway.

7 CHANGING LANDSCAPES

The clay and gibber soils gradually give way to the sandhill country. Here you see a mixing of the two soil types. You may have noticed that as the soil type changes so too does the vegetation. On the more sandy soils here, species such as Mulga, Dead Finish, Emu Bush and Needlewood occur. In contrast, the gibber plains/stony rolling downs support a shorter more open vegetation cover with species such as Saltbush, Copperburr, and Mitchell Grass. Two varieties of Mulga occur in Sturt National Park: Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and Umbrella Mulga (*A. brachystachya*). The tough timber from these trees was used by the local Aboriginal people for 'mulgas' (shields), weapons and hunting implements.

8 WHERE TO NEXT?

You have now returned to the Silver City Highway. If you are heading into Queensland, Warri Gate lies 8kms to your north (left), otherwise you can return to the township of Tibooburra 45kms to the south (right). We hope you enjoyed the tour and please call into the office in Tibooburra if you have any questions or comments.



STAYING SAFE IN PARKS

Many NSW Parks are remote and rugged places, weather can change quickly and conditions in the bush can be unpredictable. Please ensure you and your vehicle are prepared for your journey. Carry extra food and water. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear and a hat. If you become lost or stranded always stay with your vehicle. Tread lightly on the environment and it will always be here for you to visit again.

CONTACT NPWS

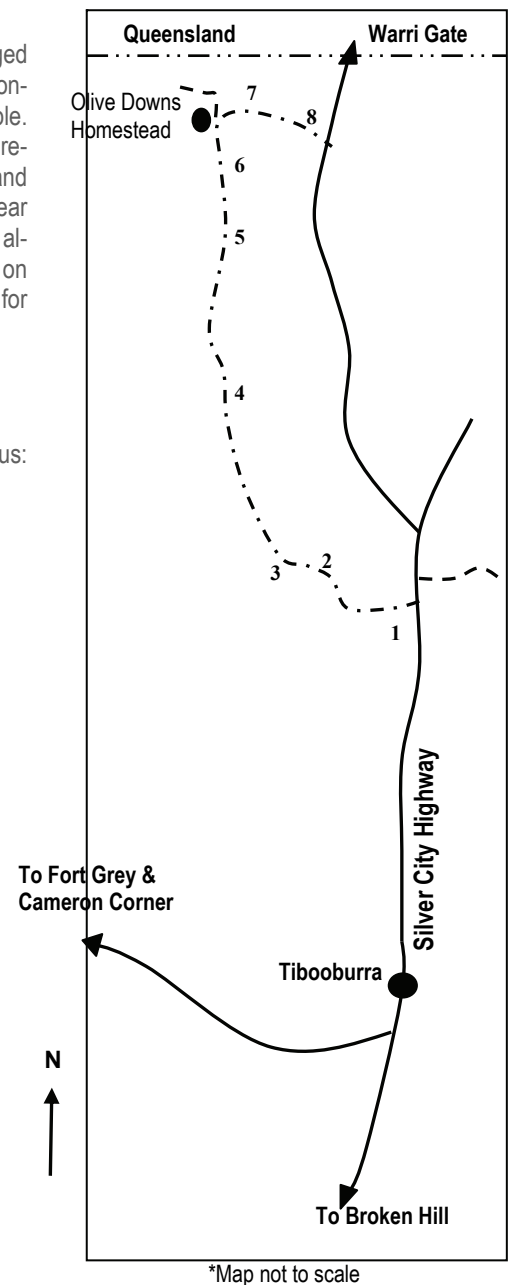
For any further information please contact us:
NPWS

51 Briscoe Street
TIBOOBURRA NSW 2880

Ph 08 8091 3308

Fax 08 8091 3309

Tibooburra.office@environment.nsw.gov.au



To Fort Grey & Cameron Corner

Tibooburra

To Broken Hill

*Map not to scale