

# Kimberley Highlights 2: Aug-Sept 2013

Our group consisted of Alec & Ann from Scotland, Dianne & Storm from Tasmania, Sue from South Australia, Paul from Victoria, Amanda from Queensland and guide Russell from Darwin. Dianne and Amanda had walked with us before. For the others it was a new experience.

## Section 1: Canoeing the Ord

**Day 1.** Maka from Go Wild Eco-noeing picked us up early and drove us to the start just below the main Ord River Dam. After a short stop for a view over lake Argyle we were off. The current in this section was strong enough so we hardly had to paddle and gentle enough so there was little chance of overturning. The first part of the paddle took us through Carlton Gorge.



Setting off



Aerial view of Carlton Gorge



Paddling in Carlton Gorge

When you are drifting quietly along, the birds are relatively undisturbed by your presence and allow you to get quite close.



Comb-crested jacanas

There are a few places where the current is a bit faster and you need to be careful to choose the correct channel. All of our groups have made it through without incident but another couple



Heading into the fast water

we met on this trip did manage to overturn. The photo shows the beginning of the fast water. While it doesn't get much faster than this, it was more sensible to concentrate on paddling than on taking photos so we don't have any photos of the fastest section.

Once through the fast part, we pulled off onto a small beach (the only good beach on this section) where we had a relaxing lunch and a swim.

After lunch, we climbed back into our canoes and continued downstream to Cooliman Camp where we spent two nights.



Late afternoon view from the canoe



Relaxing at camp



The photo at left shows the sunrise as seen from the dock at Cooliman Camp. The sunrise came in parts. The first light was pretty good, then it faded, then it got really colourful, then the sun came up and the colour quickly disappeared.

**Day 2.** Most of those who paddle down the Ord have no idea that there are some wonderful spots that can only be reached on foot. Our big walk came the next day when we left our gear and headed up into the hills behind the camp. We had a leisurely start, walking a short distance to where we began



Heading on to the side gorge

the climb. The climb isn't particularly difficult, but it is fairly steep and you do have to push through some spinifex. Once at the top, we stopped for some good views back over the river before continuing across into the main gorge on a small tributary of the Ord.



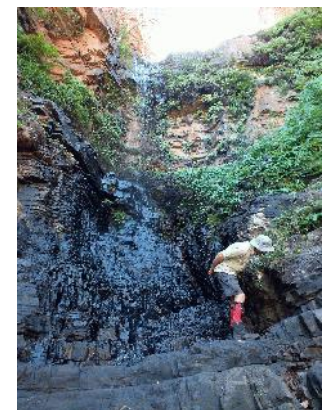
The first climb



Last swim before camp

Once in the gorge, we found a small waterfall and a pool for our first swim of the day. We then worked our way downstream to another, larger, shady pool fed by a small waterfall where we stopped for lunch.

After lunch, we moved slowly downstream, stopping for another swim at twin pools above one of the final small drops before reaching the level of the Ord. From here we had to scramble back up to where we'd first climbed up in the morning. The afternoon light made the views even better than they had been in the morning.



Lunch waterfall



Afternoon view over the Ord from above Cooliman Camp

**Day 3.** We headed off fairly early to take advantage of the cool of the morning. Our first stop was another camp only about half an hour after we left. It took us less than another hour to pull into a small creek at the entrance to Herbie's Hideaway. The entry is



Entry to Herbie's hideaway

hidden in thick vegetation. We parked our canoes in the shade and walked 15-20 minutes to reach a magnificent pool below another small waterfall. Time for another swim. Back on the river, we continued to jumping rock.

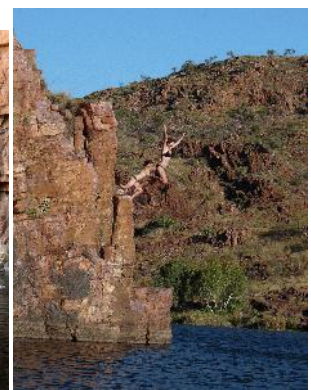


Early morning, day 3

None of this group were as keen as those in the picture, but it's always an option.



Herbie's Hideaway



Jumping Rock



Landing at Stonewall Camp

It was only a short paddle from Jumping rock to Stonewall Camp where Spillway/Stonewall Creek meets the Ord. Stonewall was the original creek. When the Argyle Dam was constructed, they dug a Spillway which joins Stonewall Creek so that in peak floods the water is far deeper than it used to be. Not that that was a problem at this time of year.

We arrived just after 3 pm. We had a nice relaxing time. Three of the others set off on a pre-dinner paddle about 4:45. The rest stayed back to relax and enjoy the scenery.

**Day 4.** From Stonewall, we were on the upper reaches of Lake Kununurra so there was almost no current to help us along. We got an early start to enjoy the cool, called in at a small rainforest creek, then pushed on to Zebra Rock Gallery. September is a hot time of year so, rather than continue paddling into the heat of the day, we chose to stop for lunch and get picked up from here. We were driven back to Kununurra for a relaxing afternoon as we prepared for the next section.



Final pick up

**Final note.** While no one on this trip was particularly keen on fishing, people on some of our other Ord canoe trips have really enjoyed the fishing and have had fresh fish for dinner on several occasions.