



40 THINGS TO DO IN SHEPHERDS HILL RECREATION PARK

A park that endures hot dry summers but fills with new life every other season from fungi, frogs, moss, wildflowers and flowing creeks. It's the type of park for family picnics, short bushwalks, bike riding, cloud watching and walking with bare feet. Although it's near a busy main road a short walk see's the buzzing sound of pollinators rival the hum of distant traffic. It's the perfect place to explore puddles, walk beneath towering gum trees, and test the depth of the flowing creeks with the perfect stick.

Shepherds Hill Recreation Park is a park much-loved by families and those seeking an escape from the busy urban surrounds. Although it's close to the busy Main South Road, a short walk in sees the traffic noise disappear and the sounds of nature increase. It has bike trails for beginners to advanced riders and shared use trails that range from easy to challenging.

The Park is home to Western Grey Kangaroos, Koalas, Stumpy Lizards, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Superb Fairywrens, Short-beaked Echidnas, bats, possums, butterflies, beetles, and many other amazing creatures. It also contains examples of the Endangered Grey Box Grassy Woodland.

For thousands of years the Kurna (Gar-na) people lived in areas such as Shepherd Hills Recreation Park with many plants, animals, and landforms playing an important role in their culture.

Located in the Park is a Pony Club and Archery Range (both open to new members). Red flags fly when archery is in progress and is off limits to the public. The Park is cared for by Park Rangers and the passionate Friends of Shepherds Hill Recreation Park (the Friends group are very welcoming of new members). It's also accessible via public transport.

You can download a map for Shepherds Hill Recreation Park from environment.sa.gov.au/parks

PARK PROFILE

- No access if red flags are flying
- Pram access
- Shared trails
- Riding only
- Walking only
- Scenic views

Name: Shepherds Hill Recreation Park.

First established: 1972.

Size: 77 Hectares.

Location: Shepherds Hill Recreation Park is located in the foothills of the Mount Lofty Ranges, nine kilometres south of Adelaide in the City of Mitcham.

Some endangered or rare species:

Cunningham's Skink (*Egernia cunninghami*), Crested Shrike-tit, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Variable Glycine (*Glycine tabacina*) Hairy Heads (*Ptilotus erubescens*), Scrambled Eggs (*Goodenia pinnatifida*), and Pale Flax-lily (*Dianella longifolia* var. *grandis*).

Endangered plant community:

Grey Box Grassy Woodland (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*).

AUTUMN



Autumn in the Park starts out dry but soon enough the rains arrive.

Seedlings and mushrooms push their way out of soil with moss and lichen coming to life.

- 1 In the evening head up to Seaview Loop to find the Mary Ragless seat and watch the sunset over the Adelaide plains and coastline. 🦘 🦘
- 2 Challenge yourself by taking a hike along the Grey Box Loop; and keep an eye out for the rare Cunningham's Skink. 🦘 🦘
- 3 Walk along a section of the Grey Box Loop and spot the white flowers of the old **Grey Box** trees. For a greater challenge walk the 2.8km loop in full. 🦘 🦘
- 4 Go for an early morning walk to listen and spot the many birds that call the Park home such as the Adelaide Rosella who you may see using old tree hollows.
- 5 After heavy autumn rains head out for a walk along River Red Gum Loop and spot the different types of moss and lichen as they come to life. 🦘
- 6 On a clear autumn evening head to the Seaview Loop and find a place to watch the sunset as it sets the sky alight with colour. 🦘 🦘
- 7 In late autumn, explore the link trails around the creeks and listen out for the 'crick-crick-crick' of the **Common Froglet**.
- 8 Go on a scavenger hunt along River Red Gum Loop and look for different shaped rocks, colourful feathers, fallen gum tree flowers, and other natural treasures (remember to put them back). 🦘
- 9 Depending on your bike skill level: try your training wheels at the Kids Zone; get some air at The Bowl, or challenge yourself and try the Diagonal Ascent and the Intermediate Downhill. 🦘
- 10 On a sunny autumn day stroll along the Seaview Loop and see if you can spot mobs of Western Grey Kangaroos or Nankeen Kestrels in the sky. 🦘 🦘

WINTER



Winter in the Park sees the rains set in and creeks start to flow.

Puddles are around every corner, frogs calling and winter weeds starting to grow.

- 1 Take your gum boots and stroll along River Red Gum Loop where you'll walk through puddles, hear frogs, and spot sleeping Koalas in the forks of trees. 🦘
- 2 In late winter, walk along Seaview Loop and take time to smell the **Golden Wattle** as it begins to bloom. 🦘 🦘
- 3 Take a camera or sketch pad to the Park and capture, sketch, or write something about the wintry landscape.
- 4 Following winter rains discover pools of water in low lying areas in the creek lines along the River Red Gum Loop, in some years small waterfalls appear as the water flows into the north-western part of the Park. 🦘
- 5 On a sunny winter's day have a picnic and take along a gas BBQ.
- 6 Explore a creek line in the Park and watch for tadpoles or see what natural things float such as gum leaves, gum nuts and sticks.
- 7 Search for droplets of water sitting on the weedy nasturtium leaves and soursob flowers, or on the blades of native grasses.
- 8 Choose a trail to go for a fungi foray and spot (but don't touch) the many fungi that come to life in winter such as **Dye Balls** and the Spectacular Rust Gill Fungus.
- 9 Starting out on the River Red Gum Loop go in search of the hidden bridge along the creekline and listen for the continuous 'weep-eep-eep' of the Brown Tree Frog. 🦘
- 10 Hike along River Red Gum Loop and head into Watiparinga Reserve and discover the old single railway track through the Eden Hills train tunnel that was once part of the Adelaide to Melbourne train line. 🦘 🦘

DID YOU KNOW?

- Mistletoe is an important part of the Park's habitat. It's spread by the Mistletoebird that eats
- the sticky fruit causing its droppings to be sticky. The bird wipes the stickiness onto a branch,
- which contains the seeds, and Mistletoe can then grow.

SPRING



Spring in the Park is the perfect time for picnics and watching clouds drift across the sky.

With wildflowers blooming providing pollen for bees and nectar for butterflies.

- 1 Find a place to throw out a rug and enjoy a picnic to the sounds of birds, insects and wind within trees. Dogs can also join you provided they are on a lead.
- 2 On a sunny spring day find some flowers you can quietly observe. Watch for bees, beetles, butterflies, hover flies or other insects as they collect pollen or sip nectar.
- 3 Select one of the many trails in the Park and do some early morning bird spotting for **Kookaburras**, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Rainbow Lorikeets, Red Wattlebirds and New Holland Honeyeaters.
- 4 Head up along the Seaview Loop and spot the different native grasses such as Wallaby-grass, Spear-grass and Kangaroo Grass. Keep an eye out for grass-loving butterflies such as the Southern Grass Dart, **Common Brown**, and Marbled Xenica. 🦋 🌻
- 5 Explore the adjoining Watiparinga Reserve which has over 170 native plants within a Grey Box Grassy Woodland (an Endangered plant community). 🌿 🌳
- 6 Walk along Seaview Loop and find the Mary Ragless Bench to sit or take a picnic rug to lie down and watch the clouds drift in the sky and talk about the shapes or creatures you see. 🌥️ 🐾
- 7 Take an early morning stroll along the River Red Gum Loop and see how many Koalas you can spot or hear (it is their mating season). 🦘 🌳
- 8 Find a grassy area, or the shade of a tree to spend a few hours reading and enjoying the spring sunshine after the cold chill of winter.
- 9 Take the River Red Gum Loop to where it crosses the creek then follow the Viaduct Track on through to the adjacent Watiparinga Reserve where you will discover spectacular rock formations and sheltered caves, once used by the Kurna people. 🦘 🌳
- 10 On a sunny spring day take a walk along the Seaview Loop or Grey Box Loop and keep an eye out for Stumpy Lizards or Common Garden Skinks as they laze in the sun. 🦎 🌞

SUMMER



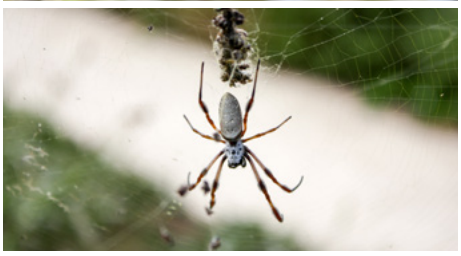
Summer in the Park is dry and the soil is bare with most wildlife sleeping during the day.

Early mornings still sees birds singing and is a perfect time for walking or riding along the Park's many pathways.

- 1 Summer is the perfect time for an early morning walk on any of the trails in the Park. The birds also love this time of the day so look out for brightly coloured Superb Fairywrens and Musk Lorikeets.
- 2 Choose a walk in the Park and go on a spider web hunt (but don't touch). Look on the logs, between trees and see if you can spot some of the many spiders that call the Park home such as the **Golden Orb**.
- 3 Grab your torch and go spot lighting. Scan the tree canopies for the glowing eyes of Brushtail or Ringtail Possums or the Southern Boobook Owl. You may also see some bats such as Gould's Wattle Bat.
- 4 Take a walk along Seaview Loop or Grey Box Loop and try to spot the white-flowering Christmas Bush. When you find it smell the sweet-scented flowers and see what insects are visiting. 🦋 🌻
- 5 On an early summers morning take your dog for a walk through the Park or take your bike to the 'Kids Zone' or 'The Bowl'. 🐾 🚲
- 6 Take a stroll along the shaded creek lines in search of low hanging branches of a **River Red Gum** and watch the flowers for visiting insects or search for tree hollows and watch what birds use them.
- 7 After summer rain go for a walk through the Park, take in the smell of damp earth or take your shoes off for a barefoot sensory experience.
- 8 If you are an experienced bike rider, jump on one of the intermediate downhill tracks.
- 9 Explore old logs throughout the Park and see what types of patterns they have, balance on them or use them as a picnic spot.
- 10 Pick one of the trails in the Park and go in search of animal tracks and traces such as Echidna diggings, scratches on trees, ant mounds, kangaroo or possum scats, and bird feathers.

LOOKING AFTER THE PARK

L: Golden Orb spider (JT)
R: River Red Gum (JT)



L: Kookaburra (JT)
R: Common Brown butterfly (JT)



L: Golden Wattle (JT)
R: Dye Balls (JT)



L: Grey Box (JT)
R: Common Froglet (JT)



- 1 Keep wildlife wild:** We must never feed wildlife as it can be unhealthy for them and impact their natural behaviour. If you encounter wildlife always keep a safe distance so you don't frighten them and always keep your dog on a lead and pick up after them.
- 2 Leave things as you found them:** If you discover ant mounds, decaying logs or bark hanging off trees they all provide important habitat and should be left undisturbed.
- 3 Leave nothing but footprints:** Always take your rubbish with you or even better pack a litter-free lunch. Stick to designated pathways as many of the plants, rocks and other geological features are fragile and easily damaged.

- 4 Share my trail:** If riding in the Park remember to keep left, ride slow, and say g'day.

Always keep to designated bike paths as the plants and animals can be affected when their habitat is damaged by new tracks being created.

This resource is part of the Park of the Month, an initiative run in partnership between Nature Play SA and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Photos by Jason Tyndall (JT). Writings by Jason Tyndall, Nature Play SA.