



• Otways Heart of the Great Ocean Road •

Kennett River Glow-Worm Walk

Otway Trails

Look for the other Trail Notes in the series. Copies of these notes are downloadable from the following websites: www.visitotways.com www.visitapollobay.com www.otwaycast.com

Look for the Otways trails symbol:



When walking in the Otways make sure you follow these simple tips:

Sudden and extreme weather changes are common in the Otways, so carry practical all-weather clothing and remember that your mobile phone may be out of range. Always carry water, food, matches and a torch in case of emergency. Take note of signs and landmarks. Advise someone of your intended location and estimated time of return.

Respect the environment and stay on marked paths. Do not damage vegetation or disturb wildlife. All native animals and plants are protected. No fires, including barbecues, can be lit on a day of total fire ban.



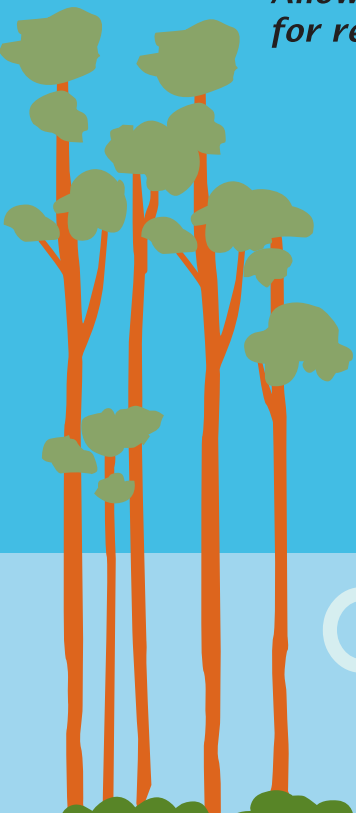
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*Night walk.
Allow one hour
for return drive and walk.*



Otways Trails

Kennett River Glow-Worm Walk

Night walk.

*Allow one hour
for return drive and walk.*

*We recommend that you arrive at the site before dusk
to familiarize yourself with your surroundings.*

It is a good idea to wear sturdy walking shoes, and for safety you will need a torch. An idea is to have a BBQ at the Grey River Picnic Area while waiting for the sun to set. Be aware that by bringing your own wood you will aid in preservation of the local habitat. Especially pleasant during day-light saving months but not allowed on total fire-ban days.

Drive along the Great Ocean Road to the small hamlet of Kennett River. Immediately after the Camping Ground take the Grey River Road, on your left.

Continue along the road for approximately 6km into the Angahook Lorne State Park. Make sure you spot the koalas in the gum trees on your way. You will notice how the forest becomes taller and the undergrowth much denser. Prominent in these wet forests in the south are tall Blue Gum, Mountain Ash, Messmate, Manna gum and Mountain Grey Gums. The dense understorey includes Blackwood Wattle, Kangaroo Fern and Rough Tree fern.

At the Grey River Picnic Area, you will cross a small bridge into a beautiful clearing with wood-fired BBQs. Park your car in this area.

Once night falls, walk back across the bridge using a torch to avoid stumbling. Remember, noise and strong light will cause the Glow-Worms to "switch off" so be very quiet and try to use your torch sparingly.

You will see the Glow-Worms on the left and right embankments. There are far more on the left because they like cool damp places. The left side receives less sunlight and is therefore a more favourable environment.

We recommend you return along the Grey River Road to Kennett River.



Glow Worm Facts

Glow-Worms are not worms but rather the larvae of fly like insects called fungus gnats.

Tips on how to help protect Glow-Worms.

As glow-worms prey on small insects, it is best not to wear insect repellent and to refrain from smoking or lighting fires in the 'Glow-Worm's' environment.

Larvae produce threads of sticky silk,

their glow attracts prey which are then ensnared by the sticky threads.

The light "goes out" if disturbed in any way,

For example: torch light or noise will turn out the light for up to 15 minutes.

Life Cycle.

The adult Fungus Gnat lays up to eighty eggs, which hatch after 2-3 weeks.

The larvae (Glow-Worms) grow over a period for up to nine months, they pupate for nine days after which the adult stage is reached.

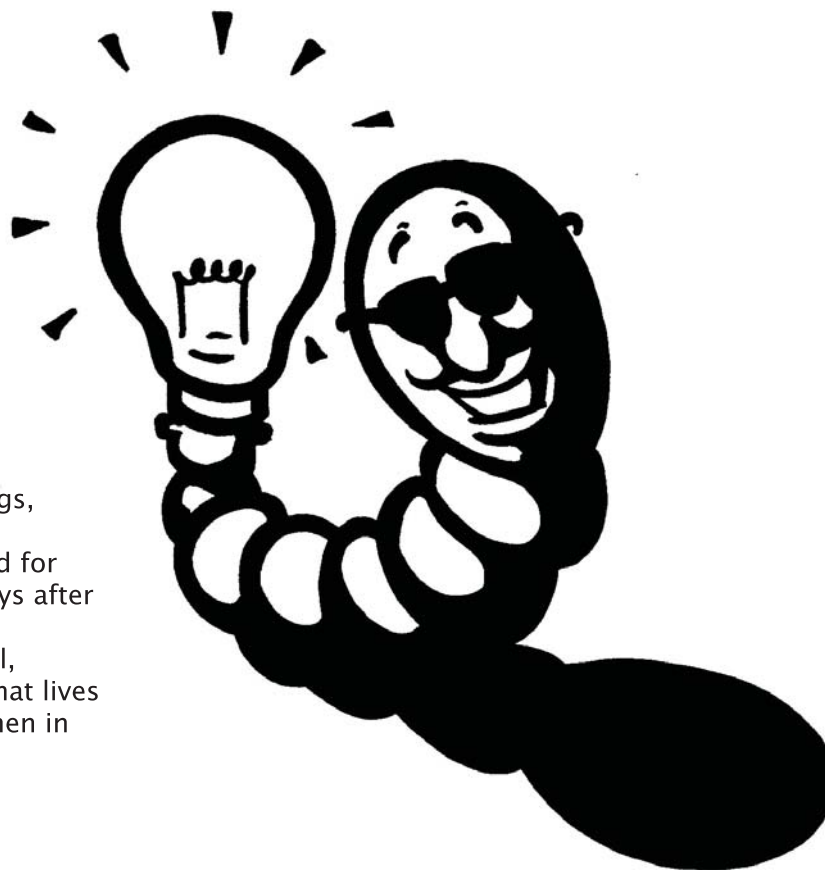
Only about 1.5 cm long in length, nocturnal, sluggish and harmless, the adult Fungus Gnat lives for only a short period (48 to 72 hours). When in flight they make a buzzing noise.

The adult fly

has an uncontrollable light, with the female being brighter than the male until fertilised.

Where does the light come from?

The end of the abdomen is luminous. The light is actually emitted from tiny tubes (malpighian tubules) which open into the gut of the larvae and are visible through transparent skin at the end of its body.



Glow-Worms are very shy!

Please look, but don't touch. Glow-Worms are sensitive to disturbance and will 'switch off' their lights and retreat into a crack if they or their snares are touched.

Tips on how to help protect Glow-Worms.

Glow-worms are nocturnal and rely on sunlight to set their daily rhythm. Shining torches on the insects signals them to 'switch off' their bioluminescence. To get the most out of a Glow-Worm display, make sure your torchlight is directed towards the ground.

Glow-Worms are found

in dark damp places, often on soil banks with overhanging ledges.

Tips on how to help protect Glow-Worms.

As well as residing in caves and under rocky overhangs, Glow-Worms can also be found along creek embankments and beside walking tracks. For this reason it is important to remain on designated walking tracks to prevent stepping on them.

Many thousands

may live in large colonies, giving a spectacular effect.