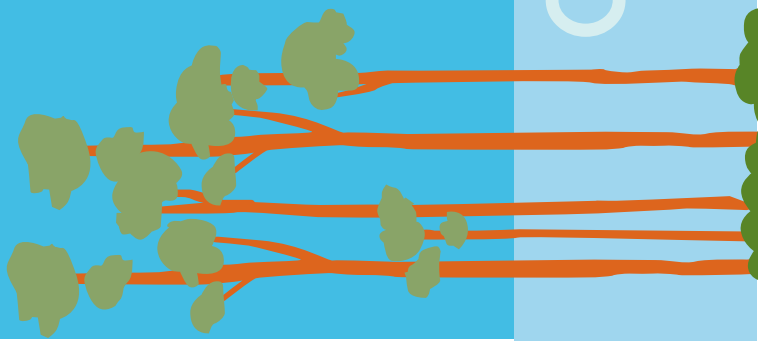
• Otways Heart of the Great Ocean Road •

Red Rock Volcanic Reserve Drive

Scenic drive and volcanic vistas

45minutes return drive from Colac.

Otways Trails



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.otwaycoast.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 barbeques, can be lit on a day of total fire ban.

Great Ocean Road Visitor Information Centre
100 Great Ocean Road,
Apollo Bay, Victoria 3233
Telephone (03) 5237 6529
gorvic@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Colac Visitor Information Centre
Cnr. Murray and Queen Streets,
Colac, Victoria 3250
Telephone (03) 5231 3730
colacvic@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Red Rock Volcanic Reserve

Getting There

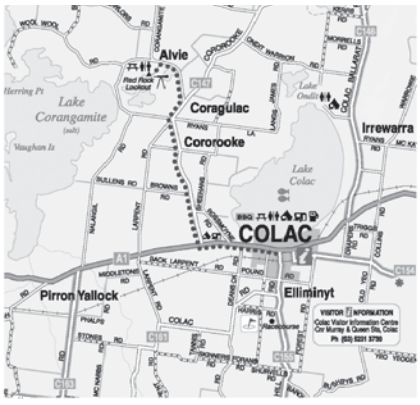
Red Rock Scenic Reserve lies 17 km north west of Colac. Follow the signs to Red Rock and the lookouts.

From Colac, follow the A1 west for 5km and turn right at the Alvie Red Rock sign. Proceed through the settlements of Cororooke and Coragulac.

Note the Bonlac dairy processing factory on your right as you pass through Cororooke. In Coragulac, Saint Brendan's Catholic Church is a land mark on the left.

Alvie township was the heart of a rich potato and onion growing district until the latter half of last century. Note the vineyard and winery/ restaurant just before you begin the ascent to Red Rock. Historic Saint Andrews Anglican Church built in 1895 and featuring English stained glass windows, nestles at the foot of the rise.

You are now atop one of Victoria's youngest volcanoes!



Endangered Wildlife

The Corangamite Water Skink is critically endangered and less than 3,000 exist in the world. They are only found in small populations near wetlands around here.

Facilities at Red Rock

Picnic area, public toilets, playground, free gas BBQ and undercover seating. Easy coach and car parking.

Surrounding Stone Walls

The most impressive and important network of dry stone walls in Australia is located in the western district of Victoria. You have seen some of the extensive network on your trip out to Red Rock.

The volcanic activity in the district has shaped the landscape and formed stones covering the plains.

Dry Stone Walling was a skilful craft, often handed down from father to son. Most of the substantial walls were built after the gold rush and after the introduction of the rabbit, although there is evidence they were in existence from the late 1840's.

Source: Dry Stone Walls in Corangamite, Corangamite Arts Inc.

Eastern Lookout

To the North East are Beeac township and Lake Beeac. The milky white appearance of Lake Beeac is due to hyper salinity. Red-necked Avocet and Banded Stilt (birds) feed on the large numbers of brine shrimp which live in the lake.

Colac city and Lake Colac lie to the South East. Lake Colac is the largest freshwater lake in Victoria, with a surface area of 2,700 hectares, circumference of 33km and average depth of 2.5 metres.

Directly below is situated the historic bluestone homestead, Coragulac House. The property is in private ownership and not open to the public.

Otway Ranges are in the distance sweeping to the south.

Western Lookout, View Platform & Stairway

In the distance view Mount Elephant (so called because of its shape) near the township of Derrinallum.

Lake Corangamite is the largest permanent salt water lake in Australia (three times saltier than the sea) with a surface area of 25,160 hectares. Tongues of lava extend out into the lake, and these rocky outcrops and beaches of tiny Coxiella shells form the shoreline.

One of Victoria's most important bird habitats, the lake is home for approximately 75 species. It is one of the few breeding grounds for Pelicans.

Want to Know More About Volcanoes?

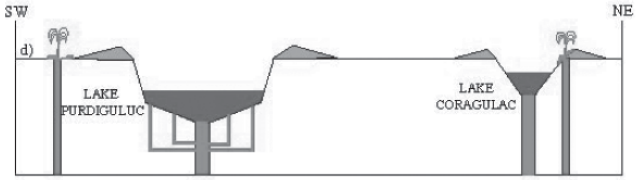
The book "Volcanoes in Victoria, published by the Royal Society of Victoria, is available for sale at the Colac Visitor Information Centre.

Volcanic Significance

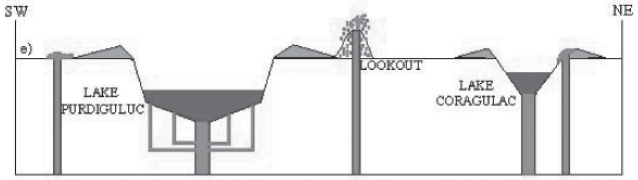
The Red Rock Volcanic Complex was the site of many explosive volcanic eruptions. All the craters and lakes before you were produced by these eruptions. Forty separate eruption points have been found in this volcanic complex, which consists of overlapping maars, scoria cones and small lava flows.

The craters (known as maars) are the result of the explosive interaction between magma and groundwater. The hills (scoria cones) formed from eruptions when gasses dissolved in the magma expanded, causing the violent eruption of scoria onto the surface.

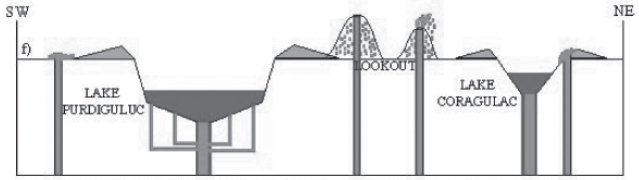
Some of the maars visible from Red Rock are now filled with water, forming lakes.



Short period of Hawaiian fire fountaining. Spatter deposits preserved in the eastern rim of Lake Coragulac and northwestern Lake Purdiguluc.



Eruption of the southwest cone at the lookout. Scoria fallout occurred in proximal locations building the cone as well as downwind fallout across Lake Coragulac.



Eruption of the northern cone at the lookout. Other cone may or may not have still been active at this time.

Eruption History

The eruption history of the Red Rock Volcanic Complex comprised two main phases. The first involved the interaction between magma (molten rock) and groundwater that formed the maars.

Multiple vents exist within most of these maars and many of these may have been active at the same time. The fine grained volcanic ash produced during these eruptions was blasted from the vent to form the rims around the maars.

The second phase was driven by magmatic gasses and formed the scoria cones. Initially there was a short period of fire-fountaining, where the magma comes from the ground in a fluid lava fountain. This was followed by an alternative eruption style where the magma was fragmented at depth and ejected as scoria fragments. These formed the scoria cones which occur throughout the Red Rock Complex and overlie the maars from earlier eruptions.

The Red Rock Complex is an example of the potentially explosive nature of volcanic eruptions.

The volcanoes form a contrasting landscape to the otherwise flat countryside which was formed by previous lava flows.

Similar explosive vulcanism occurred in many other areas of western Victoria and eastern South Australia. These volcanoes, combined with lava flows from other centres, make up the Newer Volcanics Province of south eastern Australia. Vulcanism within the Newer Volcanics Province occurred from 4.6 million years ago, with the last eruption occurring 4,500 years ago at Mt. Gambier in South Australia.

Other maars produced during this time include Lake Purrumbete southeast of Camperdown, the lake at Tower Hill near Warrnambool and the Blue Lakes at Mount Gambier.

Scoria cones include Mt Shadwell at Mortlake, Mt Leura at Camperdown and Mt Elephant at Derrinallum. You can follow the Volcanoes Discovery Trail, stretching from Colac to Mount Gambier in South Australia

(www.volcanoesdiscoverytrail.com).