Fossicking for the opal

The eastern part of the Fossicking Area has always been popular with tourists as a place to "speck" or "noodle" fragments of opal or ironstone matrix from the surface or shallow depth. In this area the main nut band appears to have been exposed at the surface, so that a layer of loose rubble of broken ironstone nut fragments covers the surface to a depth of about 600mm. Spotting chips of opal or fragments of matrix while digging through this material is relatively easy with a bit of practice. Fragments may also occur on the spoil heaps of shafts from the old mining activities.

Requirements

To fossick you need to be the holder of a Fossicker's Licence. Individual, family, club, educational institution and commercial tour operators' licences can be obtained for this area or the whole of the State for periods between one and twelve months, with fees varying accordingly.

Licences can be obtained from Departmental offices (including that at Quilpie), the Paroo Shire Council, Cunnamulla or selected local businesses.

Hand tools only are permitted.

Several mining claims and mining leases are currently within the Fossicking Area (see map); these must not be entered without the permission of the holders. The corners of each tenure are marked by pegs.

Camping

Camping is prohibited in the Yowah Fossicking Area.

A camping / caravan park is situated in the town of Yowah.

Precautions

The best time to visit the opal fields is April - September.

Summer is best avoided due to the high temperatures and possible heavy rains making road access impossible in some areas. Road conditions should be checked with the RACQ or local police. Emergency supplies including food, water, first aid kit and vehicle spares should be carried when travelling in remote areas.

Code of Conduct

To protect the area for the future and minimise conflict with other visitors, please:

• Make safe any excavation on leaving.
• Remove all rubbish and dispose of properly.
• To avoid erosion, keep vehicles to the established tracks.
• Do not interfere with the vegetation or wildlife. Shooting is prohibited.
• Control pets so they do not annoy others or the wildlife.
• Minimise noise from radios, vehicles etc.
• Avoid lighting fires in dry conditions and keep a 2m diameter cleared space around fireplaces.

For further information:

The Mining Registrar
Quilpie Mining District
Court House
Buln Buln Street
PO Box 29
Quilpie Qld 4480

Telephone: (07) 4656 1266
Fax: (07) 4656 1442

The Chief Executive Officer
Paroo Shire Council
PO Box 75
Cunnamulla Qld 4480

Telephone: (07) 4655 1777
Fax: (07) 4655 1647

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To Moolya
To Blackgate
(approx 22 km)

To Modra
(approx 10 km)

Numerous Tracks

Fossicking Area Boundary
Existing Mining Leases/Claims as at 1.9.93

Scale

0
200m

Legend

Track
Direction Sign
Power Line

YOWAH FOSSICKING AREA

LOCALITY MAP

TOWN OF YOWAH

Bore Head

Entrance

Numerous Tracks

Fence Line

Fence Line