

Wentworth Falls Nature Track

Location: Start at The Conservation Hut at the end of Fletcher St in Wentworth Falls. This walk is signposted and starts at the car park behind the toilets.

Duration: 2.5 hours

Grade: Moderate

Features: waterfalls, creek, canyon, rock formations, lookouts, hanging swamp,

Trip Notes:

We set out with curiosity to find Edinburgh Castle Rock and discovered the fantastic Nature Track loop walk – a name which understates the spectacular features along this walk.

From the Conservation Hut we follow what seems like a link track - this flat sandy trail leads us past the back of homes and beside flowering natives, and soon swings left down a more eroded trail. Passing through a hanging swamp we get broken views across the valley, though we are not far from civilisation. On the right we see the service station on the highway, however here we come to a fork in the track and a sign points us to the narrower left branch. Pretty ferns line this trail and as the rosellas sing in the trees, we soon forget the development behind us. Eventually we meet the main track at an intersection, and turn left here – still signposted as the Nature Track, this is the way to Edinburgh Castle Rock.

Wooden steps take us down through the beautiful green ferns of a hanging swamp, its expanse covering the hillside. In front of us lizards scurry along the path and soon we get to a small metal walkway crossing the lush hanging swamp. On the other side the steps continue through less dense vegetation with the red splashes of Mountains Devils dotting the landscape. We descend to cross the trickling creek over a metal bridge and soon the steps end, and a white sandy path leads us to an intersection – we take the left fork here to the curious Edinburgh Castle Rock (marker 9). This is a lovely eroded rock, its swirls and rough textures creating an interesting landform and lookout. Two black cockatoos spot us and take flight soaring into the Jamison Valley ahead.

After enjoying the view we head back to the intersection where we now follow the right branch of the trail (signposted “Track”). The sandy path starts to descend, gently at first and then down a couple of flights of steep stone steps and soon we hear a waterfall below. We pass marker 8 overlooking a vast hanging swamp on the right and continue to walk under shady overhangs and around the impressive rock wall of Edinburgh Castle Rock. We come to a rocky ledge where we catch a glimpse of the creek below, then reach another ledge giving more expansive views of the valley. Here New Holland Honeyeaters dart about, and the track swings round the ledge (marker 7) where a shiny plump blue tongue is sunning itself on the path, easily camouflaged with its orange markings matching the dry leaf litter. The trail now descends more steeply with thick ferns sprouting and metal steps take us over a soggy section before getting to the pretty creek and picturesque Lillian’s Glen. Here through a canyon-like crevice water runs round a boulder and pools and cascades down the rocky creek bed, where bright green ferns line the banks. (Canyoners can reach the upper

section of Empress Canyon and Asmodeus Pool upstream from here). Lillian's Glen is a lovely spot for a break, and crossing the creek over the stepping stones takes us to the top of the lower section of Empress Canyon. This canyon is impressive and as we perch on the rocks to admire the surroundings, a group of canyoneers excitedly walk by with their wet suits and helmets, ready for their adventure.

Crossing the creek again, we continue up the steps, and get a view through the ferns into the deep canyon below. The path gently ascends and the sounds of the water fade as we rise above the canyon. Ferns of a hanging swamp are about us and there is a view of the colourful rock walls opposite, the railing keeping us from falling into the canyon below. Soon we get to an intersection (marker 5) and Lillian's Bridge. There is a wonderful view down into the canyon from this bridge, however to continue our walk we don't cross the bridge, but proceed left from the intersection ascending more steps. The track winds its way through more hanging swamp (passing markers 4,3 and 2) and soon the vegetation becomes more lush. We can hear water again as we now gently descend the pretty leaf littered steps to a beautiful picnic area. A sign board tells us this is marker 1 and gives a brief description of the Nature Track. Here at the picnic table we sit and observe the wonderful surroundings - the mossy trees, the waterfall running down the black layers of rock and the creek trickling past. An old wooden bridge adds to the charm and we cross it to get to a junction.

To get back to the start we go left up the steps (however a short detour right down to the amazing Empress Falls is well worth the effort – you may even see the canyoneers abseiling out the canyon and down these falls). Continuing up the steps we follow the signs to the Conservation Hut, passing an eroded overhang where honeyeaters dart about and orange Angophora's contrast against the yellow sandstone walls. We climb up some flights of metal steps to get to Empress Lookout with views across the valley to the canyon. More wooden steps then take us to Queen Victoria Lookout overlooking the Jamison Valley. Ascending the well sign posted track, we soon reach the Conservation Hut and stretch out on the picnic tables after the long climb.