



Gold Fever

With the current price of gold being one of the few positive things to get excited about in the resource sector, it's interesting to note that to fossick for gold all you need in most cases, is a cheap fossicking licence and a love for the great outdoors plus some basic equipment and you could be on your way to discovering untold wealth

Is it any wonder that there has been an upsurge in individuals armed with the latest in low-cost prospecting equipment, all benefiting from easy access to well recorded historically proven gold-bearing locations, who are venturing out each weekend to not only make their fortune but also enjoying the healthy outdoors.



According to the latest figures there are estimated to be in excess of 20,000 gold fossickers in Australia .

So just how easy is it to make your fortune gold fossicking? I think you know the answer to that question already, if it was easy to make a living let alone a fortune from part time fossicking, everyone would be doing it, yes, it is much easier for modern day prospectors than it was in "the good old days", after all we have modern equipment that was never even dreamed of, access to known gold bearing areas couldn't be easier. Merge the advantage of new technology and combine it with the hard earned knowledge and skills of the old-timers, who because of their labours will lead us in the right direction to proven gold bearing areas. As I asked just how difficult can it be? Well it is not easy,. After you have worked out which permit you need and just which area you can legally go fossicking in. you can now venture out confidently into the wilderness armed with your array of gold finding equipment, the first problem is knowing just where would it be likely that gold would be hiding? Because finding gold now becomes your personal ability to overcome problems and the unknown.

Gold fossicking is very simple. And there is still an colossal amount of the stuff still just waiting to be found by the part time fossicker. The problem you face is not knowing exactly where it is. It can be as close as a foot away from where you are currently standing or even digging, and you have no idea until you find it.

Every decision you make could be a life changer, If you decide in your own mind that there is no gold left in the area.

You are probably going to up stakes and move to another area. Or you could change your mind and on the off chance hope that something will turn up, wrong decision. It is important that you avoid making decisions that are not backed up by hard facts and informed observations. Prospectors, on any scale must firstly be an detective, tracking down every clue, after all a good detective never rules out possibilities before fully testing them.

Fossickers should adopt the same practice as successful gold miners and approach each area as a two step exercise, firstly take samples and do a bit of general prospecting (looking around) if positive signs then go into production (start Fossicking), this would be particularly true if you are panning in river or creek beds.

While a good metal detectors is the must have accessory for any serious fossicker it's the piece and quite of sitting next to a slow moving river or creek stream that makes panning such a popular past time.

Gold bearing rivers and creeks tend to have the gold dispersed throughout their entire streambeds, there are generally not enough gold deposits to make it worth while for even small scale professional mining companies to get involved with this style of alluvial gold mining, relying on operations that will require the large removal of gravel from the area and surrounding area to make even a small profit. This means the fossicker has to be smarter because what you will need to find is high grade deposits, this is where your detective skills come to the fore, look for the clues, know where to look and sample.

Don't be frightened to admitting that you have made a mistake and just because an area looks promising but doesn't sample well, move to another area and start again.

Gold is heavy, about six times heavier than what you would normally find in your average river or stream bed, plus we have the added advantage that gold is predictable, it tends to follow a certain path when moving in a flowing waterway. This path tends to run from inside bend to inside bend when the water is being driven by flood action, and ambling along between the bends when the water is simple flowing. Like all things worth-while gold deposits are sometimes found elsewhere, but the facts of history show that most recovered deposits have been located along these set paths.

If you follow the above as a general rule of thumb you'll be able to rule out about 90% of the waterway to start your sampling and concentrate your efforts along the path most likely to contain acceptable gold deposits.

Before we go any further lets define a couple of the terms we'll use,

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| Bedrock: | Is the solid hard rock of the earth's crust, examples are cliff face, the solid rock you see in cuttings, |
| Streambed: | All of the rocks, sand, mud and silt, gold, on the bottom of a river or creek. Always on the top of bedrock. |
| Lobe: | Is the gold deposit that is locked into the bedrock, often seen in quartz veins. |
| Placer: | Gold deposits that are created after erosion, this is gold that has broken away from the Lobe and has been deposited down stream. There will be different kinds of placer deposits, primarily how far away from the original lobe the gold has travelled, most of the time the further away the smaller the pieces of gold. |

So Lets start looking for Gold

Firstly do I need a permit to go Gold Fossicking?

Yes, in most sites, it is called a Miner's Right. A Miner's Right is a permit for prospecting and must be carried at all times while you are prospecting. Price will vary from State to State. The only exception is if you are part of an organised group prospecting under the authority of a valid Tourist Fossicking Authority.

The *Mineral Resources Development Act 1990* sets out the rights and obligations of the holder of a Miner's Right.

Important points of the Act include that you must not:

- Enter onto private property without the permission of the landowner.
- Prospect on a current Mining Licence without the permission of the licence holder.
- Use **any equipment** for excavation on the land, other than hand tools.

- Use explosives.
- Remove or damage any shrubs or trees.
- Disturb, destroy, interfere with or endanger an archaeological site or Aboriginal place or object.

In addition:

- You must repair any damage to the land arising out of the search.
- Children under 18 years of age do not need a Miner's Right if accompanied by an adult Miner's Right holder if prospecting.
- Do not disturb or remove any heritage features or objects (such as stone tools, middens, earthen mounds, bricks, building stone and old mining machinery).
- Treasure troves (hidden valuables) that may be discovered while fossicking belong to the Crown and must be reported to the Police.

Failure to comply with the above can result in prosecution.

Right that's out of the Way. I'm ready to go and find my Fortune!



Not quit, ask yourself, will my vehicle get me where I want to go and more importantly will it get me back home safely?

Most modern vehicles are more than capable of taking you and the family to the majority of the well defined Fossicking areas in Australia, it's when you start to venture into some of the more remote areas that speciality heavy duty 4Wheel drives will be required

So plan your destination carefully, and if need be hire a vehicle that can handle the rough stuff.

The Hyundai ix35 was used on a recent Northern Queensland trip and was comfortable and more than capable of handling the graded red-dirt corrugated tracks encountered, but I balked at some of the more serious off-road country we came across, swapping to the ever faithful Toyota Land Cruiser.

Assuming that because you have read all the books and watched all the videos on gold prospecting, your vehicle is up to it and you feel comfortable enough to venture out into the unknown. But are you prepared for the unexpected, because when you are out the back of nowhere by a river or stream, there's simply no way to prepare for every potential situation. However following 3 simple rules will make gold panning easier and should help to increasing your chances of finding gold.

1) **Leave the kitchen sink at home.**

Experienced panner's will only take what they need, true you'll need more than a pan but by spending a little time to put together some basic gear to take with you, you'll not only enjoy yourself more but increase your chances of finding gold.

Short list of gear you should take along with you when panning for gold:

Gold prospecting pan with deep base with ridges on the side.

A shovel to not only dig out samples but also comes in handy when nature calls, don't forget the toilet paper.

A kitchen strainer, this will help remove the larger rocks and other rubbish from your dirt.

Glass vials, useful for storing any gold you find.

Pair of Tweezers for picking up and sorting small gold flakes.

Waterproof boots are a must to stay dry and comfortable.

Bucket Ideal for sitting on when not being used to scoop out samples.

Insect-repellent, mozzies, fly's, and sand-flies all love the Aussie bush and any visitor who may venture into their domain.

Drinks (Water) and Snacks, fresh water is hard to come by in the bush.

Phone and GPS, both of which are unlikely to work but good to have.

The above list is all that is needed to get started and can be built on after you have experienced a couple of visits to the bush and decide for yourself that a few creature comforts such as camp chairs and eskies would be nice.

2) **Keep unrealistic expectations in check**

Wouldn't it be nice to return home with a bucket full of gold nuggets every time you ventured out panning for gold? High hopes and expectations of instant wealth for a lot of newcomers to the hobby are under the assumption that gold panning is some get rich quick method that will turn them into a millionaire overnight. This has happened, a first timer has taken his bucket and spade out to a local creek and walked away with a huge nugget worth a fortune, that he's found in his first bucket full, but instances like that are few and far between. Even experienced panner's looking in the right location would expect to only come away with a minimal amount of gold, but don't get disheartened, remember there's always the next pan that could be full of gold, so enjoy the outdoors and remember it's a hobby. With the price of gold at an all time high and expected to rise, even a small amount of gold can add up to a nice side income.

So keep those expectations in check, If you follow correct gold panning techniques and have chosen the correct location, then there's a good chance you will walk away with some gold in your kit, however, it's doubtful that you'll be quitting your day job based on a day's worth of gold that you have just found in a stream. So keep those expectations realistic and only pan for gold if you truly enjoy the outdoors, enjoy the piece and quite, the beautiful scenery and the warm sunshine, but most of all enjoy yourself.

3) **Don't be too keen to top-up your Pan**

A big mistake new comers make when they first start is they wash away the small flakes of gold by being too rough with the pan, sure you still may find the bigger chunks and even the larger flakes maybe even a nugget or two left in the pan, but the smaller ones and the flakes will be carried away by the current. Over time, those small flakes begin to add up, losing you a significant portion of your valuable gold. So how are you going to avoid this?

Firstly fill your pan up with dirt from the bottom of the river or stream, also check out the river banks where you expect there could be gold.

Once you have approximately 3/4 full, you then completely submerge it under the water and shake it a bit to remove the lighter materials. If you don't shake it hard enough, none of the dirt or rocks will escape, shake it too hard and the small flakes will escape as well, so there's a fine line between shaking your pan too much and not shaking it enough.

There's only one way to get the technique right, the answer is the same as **"How do you get to Carnegie Hall?"**



Site inspection



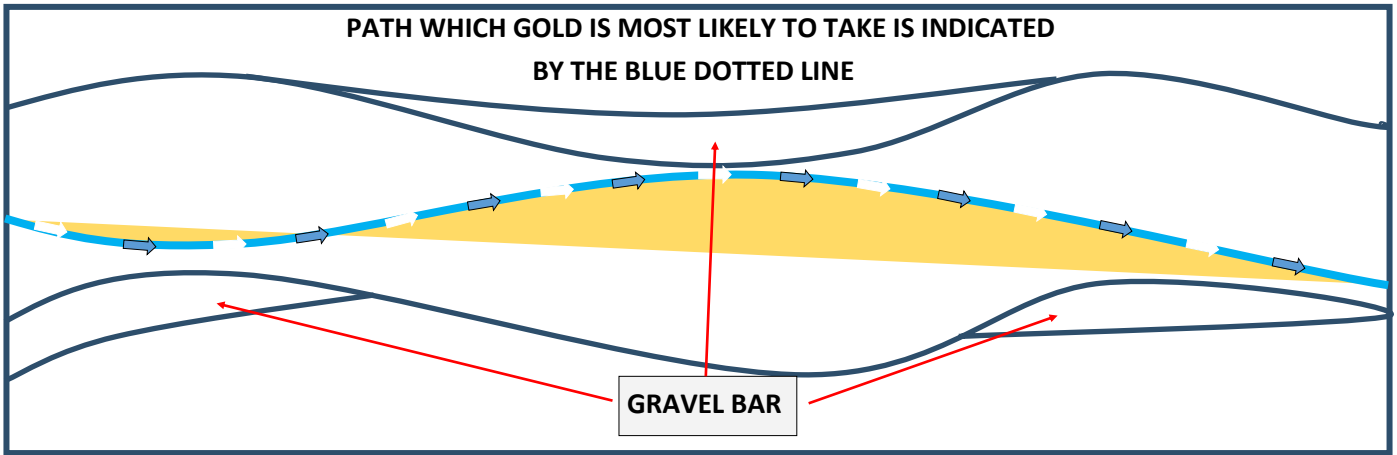
We now know that gold is six times heavier than most of the material found in Australian waterways, plus gold is predictable it's flow and where it will stop can be tracked by the astute fossicker. So follow the rules and simply go and collect the gold, nope because hidden irregularities on the bedrock channel of a river can and do change where the gold path runs. So, until you locate the gold path, you can never be certain just where it is going to be. But inside bend to inside bend (During flood stage), and a meandering line between bends, is always a good place to start your sampling. Remember sampling should be done in a slow and methodical way by digging test holes in different locations if possible, or simply doing a panning exercise at likely spots,

compare the results against each sample, then you'll be able to follow the positive results until you've located the deposit.

Most rivers have some low-grade gold in them what you'll be looking for is the general gold path, which tends to have more and better grade gold along it than the average gravel found through the river. Expect to find a bit more iron and other heavy elements along the gold path.

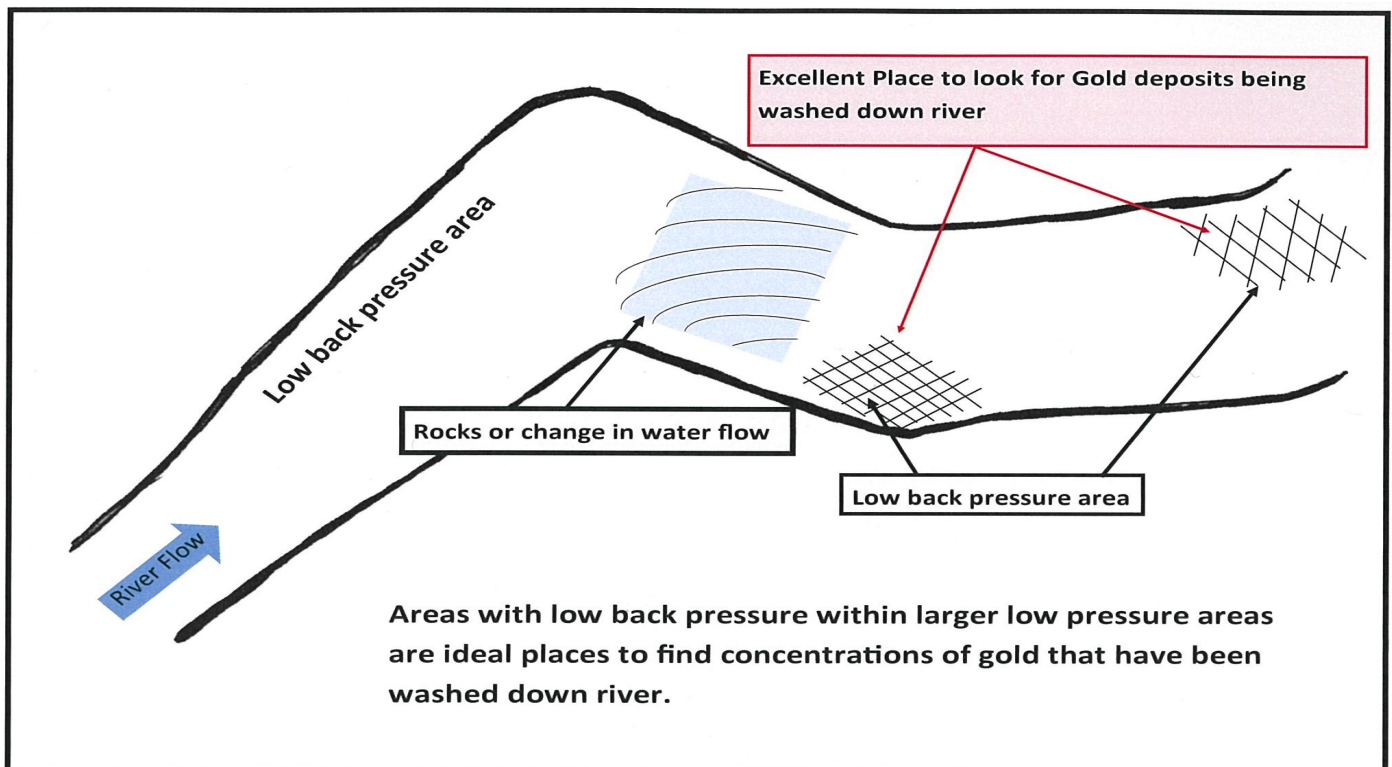
Always keep a note of the results you achieve out of each sample hole and panning exercise, because you'll be able to build a complete picture of just where the gold path is running together with the expected results when you seriously start to look for the deposit.

Because gold is so heavy, during flooding it will be washed downstream and quickly work its way to the bottom of the other materials being washed along with it. Gold also tends to move more slowly, so cracks, crevices, holes and barriers in the bedrock can trap the gold out of the flow of flood water along with other heavy materials.



Gold deposits along the general gold path can be small or large, depending upon the size of the gold trap. The most important type of gold trap in a water way is called the pay-streak. Pay-streaks always form along the gold path where the water flow slows down during major flooding. So start looking around the tail end of an inside bend in a river. Hidden irregularities in the bedrock channel can change where the gold part runs. So, until you locate the gold path, you are never going to be certain where the gold will be. Always look for that meandering line between inside bends, a good place to start your sampling. Remember be a detective and always be flexible, remember you are sampling, so move to different locations along the waterway and compare one sample against the next, that way you can establish where the better results are and you are more likely to have a better return for your days work.

The overall process of successful gold fossicking is quite simple. After all it's a science, we have seen how you can take chance out of it. You know that gold travels and deposits along special lines. After you have sampled, with knowledge of the gold path, your full of energy and your expectations have been kept in check. You are now assured of always finding that big deposit.



Sounds simple? Nope it's not that easy! This is because you never know where the next deposit is or how long it is going to take you to find it. This is why it will always come back to the most important, fundamental piece of fossicking equipment, which is you!

Irrespective of how much gold you find, I hope you enjoy yourself and enjoy the great Australian bush.

New South Wales

A license to fossick in NSW is not required except for State Forests - You can obtain a State Forest Fossicking Permit by contacting your nearest [Forestry office](#), the cost of the permit is \$22 which covers all NSW State Forests unless otherwise stated.

A Guide to Fossicking in New South Wales (NSW Government)

http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/_data/...-Wales.PDF

NSW State Forest Fossicking Permit - How to Apply!

<https://www.prospectingaustralia.com.au...hp?id=3048>

Queensland

A license is required to fossick QLD - You can obtain a Fossicking License either [Online](#) or by contacting your nearest [District and regional office](#) - A Queensland Fossicking License can be purchased to cover a period of 1 month, 6 months or 1 year with the cost ranging from around \$7 to \$45 respectively.

Fossicking in Queensland (Queensland Government)

<http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/mining/fossicking>

Purchase a Fossicking Permit Online (Queensland Government)

<http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/mining/fossi...es-permits>

Victoria

Victoria Prospecting Guide (Victoria Department of Primary Industries)

http://m.dpi.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/p...-Guide.pdf

Victoria Miners Rights FAQs (Victoria Department of Primary Industries)

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/earth-resourc...cking/faqs>

Victoria Miners Right - Apply Online

https://checkout.payments.com.au/dpi_minersRight/

Western Australia

Prospecting in Western Australia (WA Government / Department of Mines & Petroleum)

<http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/456.aspx>

Western Australia Miners Rights (WA Government / Department of Mines & Petroleum)

<http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/10871.aspx>

South Australia

South Australia Fossicking FAQs

http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/minerals/licen...aq_fossick

South Australia Prospecting FAQs

<http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/minerals/licen...rospecting>

Northern Territory

Fossicking in Northern Territory (Northern Territory Government)

http://www.nt.gov.au/d/Minerals_Energy/...Fossicking

Discovering the Undiscovered (Northern Territory Government)

http://www.nt.gov.au/d/Minerals_Energy/...nformation

Tasmania

Tasmanian Prospecting Licenses (Mineral Resources Tasmania)

<http://www.mrt.tas.gov.au/portal/page?...ema=PORTAL>

Fossicking Areas in Tasmania (Mineral Resources Tasmania)

<http://www.mrt.tas.gov.au/pls/portal/do...COLOUR.PDF>