

# protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

## HIDDEN

CRIMES AGAINST  
WILDLIFE - 4 reforms  
to help tackle them

### PLUS

PARKS AFTER DARK  
*How Dark Sky Places can  
complement protected areas*

MOUNT ETNA CAVES NP  
*Unveiling the hidden lives  
of ancient rock wallabies*

### ALSO FEATURED

NPAQ moments in time  
Green python  
Kondalilla NP  
Ranger spotlight  
10 facts about US  
National Parks



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# ABOUT NPAQ



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The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) advocates for the protection, expansion, effective management and presentation of National Parks and other protected areas in Queensland.

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### IMAGES

Front and back cover: The green python, or emerald python as it is sometimes known, is one of Australia's most vibrant reptiles. *David Clode/Unsplash*  
All other images as captioned throughout.

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- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
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| » Get your hands dirty. Participate in conservation efforts. | » Donate—support our work.                                 | » Stay in touch. Read regular updates on our website.                        |
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## DARK SKY PLACES

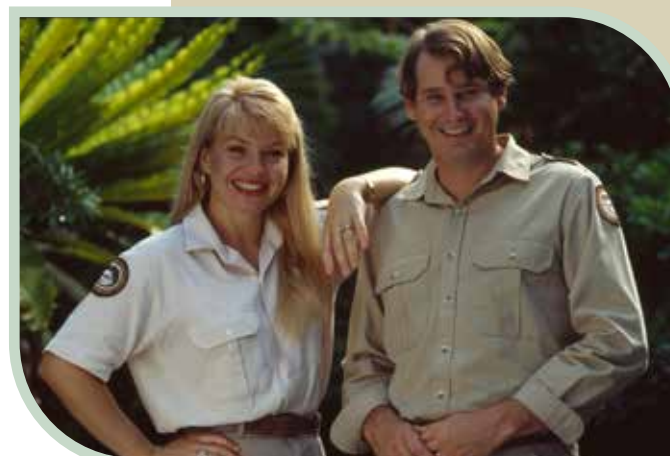
Photo: ©Damien Leyden/Unsplash



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## KONDALILLA NP

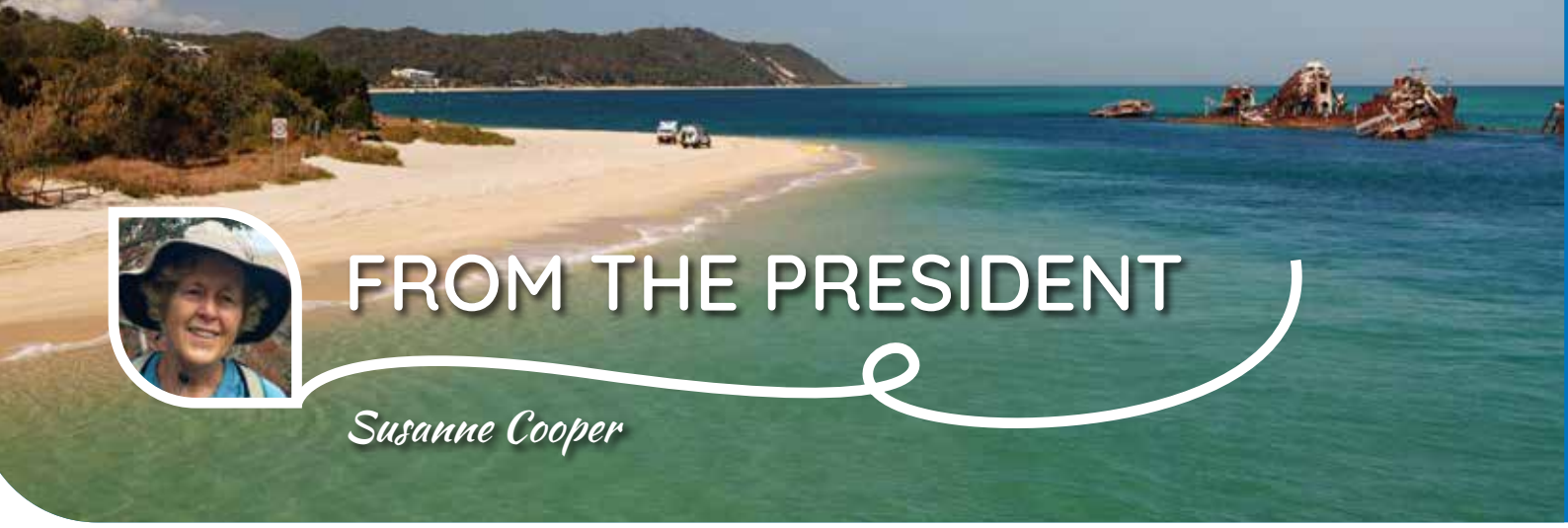
Photo: © Karin Cox



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## SAYING GOODBYE TO RANGER TIM

Photo: © Queensland Government



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Susanne Cooper*

**GREETINGS, EVERYONE! WE ARE NOW WELL INTO 2026.** The peak holiday season is over, but I hope you managed to spend some restorative time out in nature.

I spent six days soaking up the beautiful environment and special ambience of amazing Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) just before the busy season began.

We've had feedback indicating that an increasing number of visitors are not aware it is a National Park and therefore have no idea of what behaviours are or aren't appropriate, such as camping in no-camping zones or speeding

in 4WDs over vulnerable surfaces. Many impacts remain "hidden" from view and unrecognised by the general public. More public awareness campaigns about why these areas are special and how to maintain their unique values are needed. More Rangers are clearly also required across Queensland, and continual population growth and higher visitor numbers only emphasise this need.

The value of nature is also often concealed or overlooked—an ongoing challenge for NPAQ and for many other environmental organisations.

We are seeing a surge of interest in research to assess the economic value of the multiple benefits nature provides by diverse ecosystem services, ranging from water quality, to pollination, to improving our mental and physical health.

Having a dollar value doesn't solve many issues, but it does create a realistic, credible assessment of how crucial nature is to our wellbeing, and it builds a strong case for more investment in its protection and management.

ABOVE: Moreton Island. ©Karen Graham/Dreamstime. BELOW LEFT: More awareness of these islands' status as National Parks is required. ©Ashley van Dyck/Dreamstime.

NPAQ's Council recently had a very constructive strategic planning workshop. We took a step back from detail and developed a framework with a clear focus and priorities for our three-year Strategic Plan, with excellent contributions from our new Vice President Ben Richardson, and new Councillors Liz and Christian. We are fortunate to have a leadership team with energy, passion and diverse skills.

We are also developing our program for the year, including seminars, Members meetings, the annual Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture, and our Annual Dinner. Plus, of course, the Parks Connect programs and events, which continue to grow in both interest and engagement with the broader community. This all makes for an exciting and positive start to the year. We continue to punch well above our weight, even as NPAQ celebrated 96 years on 15 April!

Naturally yours,

*Susanne Cooper*

PRESIDENT



# SHARE YOUR PHOTOS



## WANT TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS OF A NATIONAL PARK OR PROTECTED AREA?

We're always looking for great snaps, and we also encourage you to let your photos inform conservation management on iNaturalist by joining in our monthly Parks Connect BioBlitzes. Email your pics to [marketing@npa.org.au](mailto:marketing@npa.org.au) or connect on Facebook (@NPAQld) or Instagram (@nationalparksassocqld) for the chance to have your photos featured in the next edition of NPAQ's *Protected*.



Marie Tarrant's image of a scarlet honeyeater, taken at D'Aguilar NP, won the Park of the Month October BioBlitz photo competition.

**Congratulations!**

Above: A scarlet honeyeater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*), photographed by Marie Tarrant at D'Aguilar NP during the Parks Connect BioBlitz. © Marie Tarrant



ABOVE: An Austral *Ellipsidion*, from the August BioBlitz at Daisy Hill CP.  
© William Bennet



ABOVE: We love this photo of a striated heron (*Butorides striata*) taken at Nudgee during our November Park of the Month BioBlitz. © Owen Lawton

# CRIMES AGAINST WILDLIFE

Crime against wildlife is surging in Australia. These 4 reforms can help tackle it...

Phillip Cassey & colleagues

AROUND THE WORLD, WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME IS SURGING. IT IS ESTIMATED TO BE THE FOURTH LARGEST ORGANISED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME SECTOR, AND TO BE GROWING AT A RATE TWO TO THREE TIMES FASTER THAN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, WRITE PHILL CASSEY AND COLLEAGUES IN *THE CONVERSATION*.

This kind of crime can take many forms, from the trafficking and trade of native species to the unlawful removal and clearance of habitat and species, lethal control such as poisoning of native animals, and illegal fishing.

There are several global assessments of these crimes and their impacts. But our understanding of their scope in Australia is

limited. This is a considerable problem, because Australia has unique and endemic wildlife species, high extinction rates, and is a country that is difficult to police due to its sheer size and vast remote areas. A new, Australia-first study addresses this knowledge gap. Published in *Conservation Science and Practice*, it reveals the most prevalent crimes against Australia's wildlife and environment, and makes four key recommendations for urgent law reform.

## CRIMES IN OUR BACKYARD

Our unique Australian species, particularly reptiles, are prevalent in the international illegal pet market.

In one high-profile case from late 2024, a man was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for 19 offences of trafficking and export of native Australian wildlife.

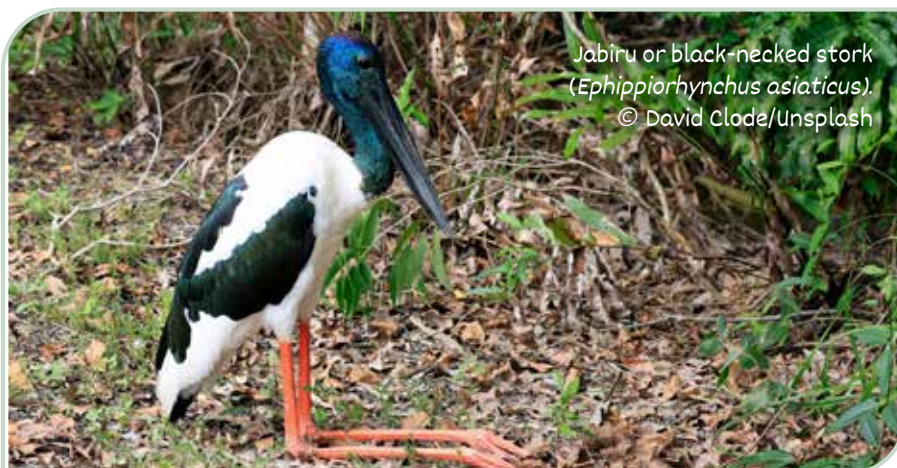
He used 24 different post offices across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory to attempt to ship 99 reptiles out of the country in cruel and cramped conditions.

We don't understand the full extent and impact of these crimes in Australia, but we do know they can be disastrous. Wildlife trafficking and illegal trade erodes biodiversity through the removal of native species from their habitats. It also fuels the spread of invasive species, parasites and diseases.

Illegal harvesting of fisheries and timber can drastically impact populations and ecosystems. Unlawful lethal control of animals can also devastate local populations.

For example, in 2018 a farmhand in rural Victoria was found guilty of illegally killing over 400 wedge-tailed eagles, a large and long-lived bird of prey which is protected by law.

In 2004, employees of a fish farm in Queensland were found to have shot and killed birds including egrets, night herons, pelicans, jabirus and ducks, in numbers one witness estimated to be "in the thousands" over a fourteen month period. →



Jabiru or black-necked stork  
(*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*).  
© David Clode/Unsplash



LEFT: Wildlife Officers in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service work tirelessly to protect Queensland's vulnerable species. Officers regularly assess permits and personal wildlife collections to ensure native species are not being harmed, farmed or trafficked illegally. Seizures of wildlife, steep fines, jail terms and even deportation are all measures Australia uses to protect wildlife.

© Queensland Government.

## THE FIRST DATABASE OF ITS KIND

[The study] used publicly available prosecutions from the High Court of Australia, the Federal Court of Australia and the Supreme, District and County Courts in each state and territory to compile a database of wildlife and environmental crime at a national scale. This is the first database of its kind in Australia.

It identified a total of 120 prosecutions between 1995 and 2024. Most of the crimes were classified as unlawful removal or damage (36.7%), illegal harvest (32.5%), or trafficking and trade (17.5%).

The most commonly targeted groups were plant species (40.8%), fish (30.8%) and reptiles (11.7%). Common targets of illegal fishing were abalone and rock lobster.

Over half of the environmental crimes (61.3%) occurred in outer regional and remote areas of Australia. These crimes overlap with areas of both greater environmental concern as well as regions more difficult to police and enforce. An increase in the number of annual prosecutions was also observed over the study period.

## QUEENSLAND CASE STUDIES

Globally, illegal poaching and trafficking of native species and wildlife trafficking is a \$27-billion-a-year illegal industry – the fourth biggest after drugs, counterfeit products and human trafficking.

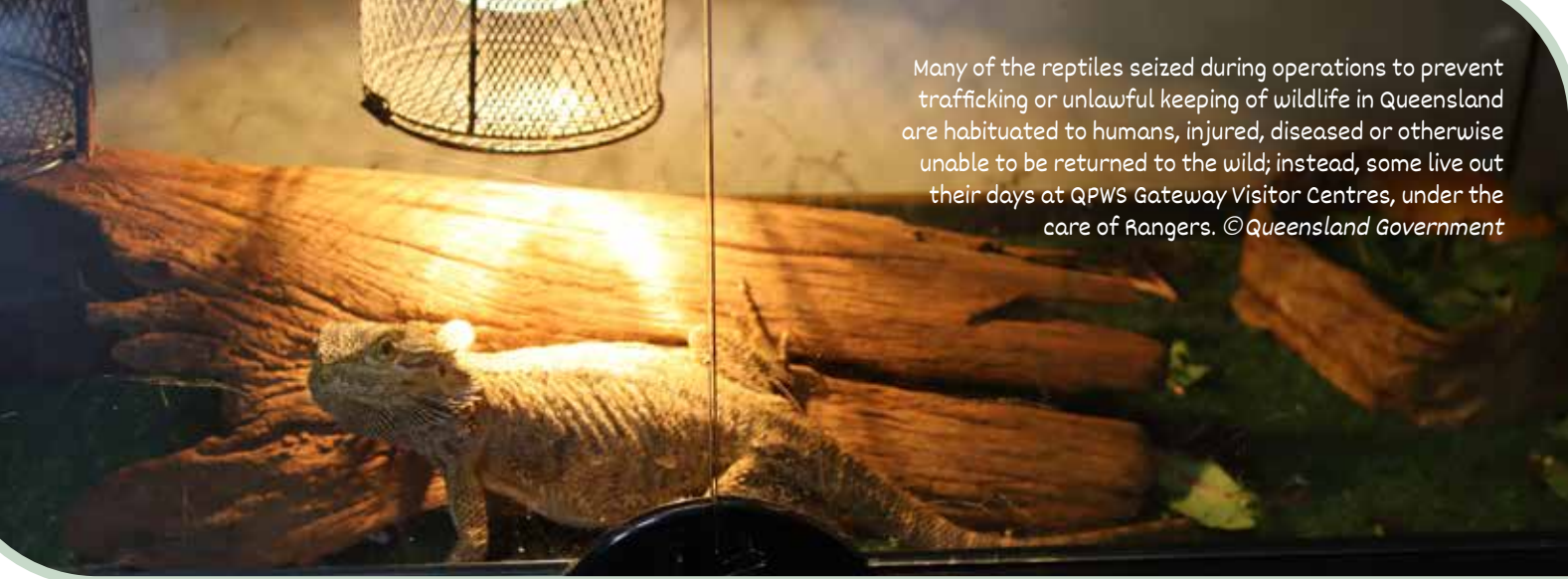
It operates around the world, but Queensland's high rate of endemic bird and reptile species makes our state a target. In March of last year, an international student received 18 months jail for attempting to export 10 packages concealing 15 lizards to China.

In November 2024, a Nambour woman was fined \$20,000 for keeping native wildlife suspected to have been unlawfully obtained or taken from the wild. "Sadly, several of the reptiles were in poor condition and needed to be humanely euthanised," said Senior Wildlife Officer Jonathan McDonald.

The Queensland Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) has increased its compliance activities in response and works closely with State and Federal agencies to detect and disrupt this illegal trade.



ABOVE: Reptiles are frequently targeted and sent via post. Recent seizures include lizards and geckos packed in a box with children's toys, and, in 2004, rare reptiles stashed in rice cookers. © Queensland Government.



Many of the reptiles seized during operations to prevent trafficking or unlawful keeping of wildlife in Queensland are habituated to humans, injured, diseased or otherwise unable to be returned to the wild; instead, some live out their days at QPWS Gateway Visitor Centres, under the care of Rangers. © Queensland Government

## TACKLING THESE CRIMES

Four key measures could help address the causes and effects of wildlife and environmental crime:

1. **Community education** to promote understanding of the damage these crimes can cause, and the ways members of the community can identify and report offences.
2. **Judicial training** and support to help sentencing judges understand the damage caused by wildlife and environmental crime, and accept they are “real crimes” and not less serious than offences against people and private property. Sentences and sentencing remarks need

to reflect the seriousness of these crimes to effectively deter and punish offenders.

3. **Boosting resources and technology** to investigate and prosecute. Governments need to invest in technology and staffing to properly detect and investigate wildlife and environmental crime. For example, satellite observation can be used to identify illegal vegetation clearance, while compliance officers are vital to the ongoing prevention and prosecution of illegal fishing offences. Continued efforts at our borders to crack down on wildlife trafficking and trade will also help

preserve Australian species, particularly reptiles.

4. **Harmonising national laws.** We need offences, definitions and penalties relating to wildlife and environmental crime to be consistent across States, Territories, and the Commonwealth. We also need to ensure that investigators have powers that cross jurisdictional State and Territory borders.

These recommendations could help Australia lead in preventing wildlife and environmental crime. In turn, they would secure Australia’s unique biodiversity and habitats from crimes that are driven by financial greed and hugely harmful to our environmental, economic and social wellbeing.

*Phill Cassey is Director of the Wildlife Crime Research Hub, Australian Research Council Industry Laureate Fellow, Adelaide University. Phill and Colleagues first published this article in The Conversation. Read more [HERE](#).*



QPWS wildlife Officers work collaboratively with Federal and International agencies to detect and deter wildlife smugglers and traffickers. © Queensland Government.

# PARKS AFTER DARK

## How International DarkSky Places can complement protected areas

*Karin Cox*

### HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU GAZED UP AT THE NIGHT SKY WHILE CAMPING AND BEEN AWED BY THE SCALE AND MYSTERY OF THE COSMOS?

When you have, it's most likely that you're in a remote area, far from the halo of artificial light that now surrounds cities and urban areas.

We may take it for granted, but readily available electric light is still a relatively new phenomenon, coming into widespread use about 150 years ago, at about the same time as the world first started gazetted and conserving National Parks. For countless millennia before, wild places at night were lit only by fire glow, bioluminescent organisms or starlight and moonlight.

As the human population increases—and urbanisation and industrialisation with it—the intrusion of artificial light, known as “ecological light pollution”, proliferates too. This form of pollution has been shown to alter the circadian rhythms, foraging habits, and navigational and reproductive behaviours of many species (most famously, moths and other nocturnal insects, and nocturnal reptiles, such as endangered marine turtles). Artificial light, scattered by the atmosphere, also creates widespread skyglow

that affects the natural dark state of wild places close to urban centres and dims the view of the Milky Way and constellations—known as “astronomical light pollution”.

Given our human history of navigation and way-finding by astronomy, an uninterrupted celestial view is considered an inalienable socio-cultural right, as set out in the Starlight Declaration of 2007, with support from UNESCO, World Heritage Centre, and the International Astronomical Union.

To combat this light pollution, DarkSky International (formerly the International Dark-Sky Association) formed in 1988 and began the International Dark Sky Places Program, which aims to conserve the night on private lands and within parks, protected areas and certain communities worldwide.

The first Dark Sky Place was Flagstaff, Arizona, in the United States, but today more than 230 Dark Sky Places dot the globe, conserving more than 160,000 km<sup>2</sup> of protected land and night skies in 22 countries and 6 continents, and falling under one of six designations:

» **International Dark Sky Sanctuaries**—The most remote (and often darkest) places in the world, whose conservation state is the most fragile.

» **International Dark Sky Reserves**—Dark “core” zones surrounded by a populated periphery where policy controls protect the darkness of the core.

» **International Dark Sky Parks**—Publicly or privately owned conservation areas that implement good outdoor lighting and provide Dark Sky Programs.

» **International Dark Sky Communities**—Cities and towns with quality outdoor lighting ordinances that educate residents about the importance of dark skies.

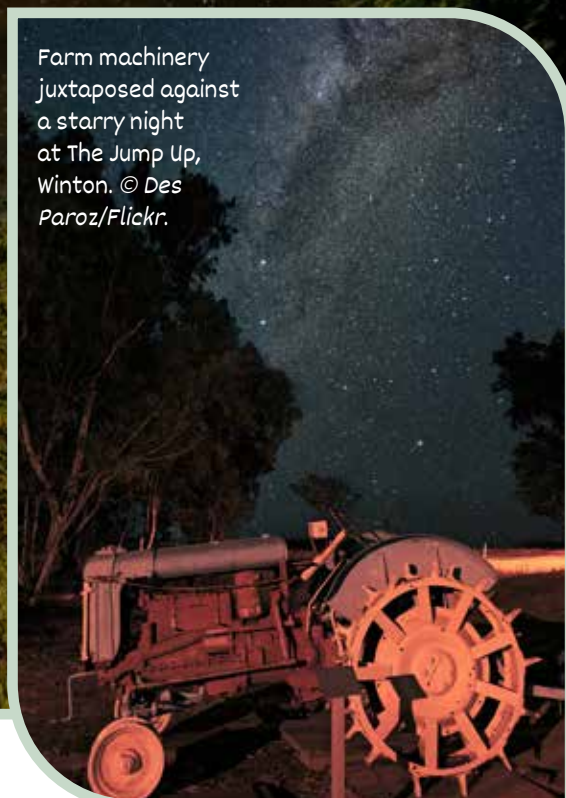
» **Urban Night Sky Places**—Urban sites that promote an authentic nighttime experience despite being in the midst of significant artificial light.

» **Dark Sky Approved Lodging**—Lodging and overnight accommodations with exceptional quality starry nights protected by DarkSky Approved lighting.

Australia currently has eight accredited Dark Sky Places, with just two in Queensland—both in the outback town of Winton.



Flagstaff, Arizona, became the first International Dark Sky Place in 2001. © David Paul/Pexels.



Farm machinery juxtaposed against a starry night at The Jump Up, Winton. © Des Paroz/Flickr.

In November 2023, Sunshine Coast Council put forward a proposal for a second Australian Dark Sky Reserve, covering an 873.5 km<sup>2</sup> parcel of privately owned and State-owned land in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland that incorporates several National Parks, including Conondale NP, Maleny NP, Mapleton NP, Mapleton Falls NP, and Kondalilla NP. So, what does this categorisation entail, and how does it match up with the obligations of protected area management?



ABOVE: Starglow over Maleny on the Sunshine Coast. © Dualiti/Flickr

## DARK SKY CERTIFICATION

DarkSky certification involves an independent, third-party review and certification process, quite separate from how States or the Federal government in Australia set aside protected areas, even if these night-time reserves overlap publicly owned land.

The qualification process assesses each proposal on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the area's management, location, public access, resources, and night sky quality (a measure of how close the night sky is to its natural darkness).

Once certified, Dark Sky Places must maintain DarkSky's missions and values and are subject to regular review, and even revocation of the certification if they do not:

- » Commit to monitoring and recording night sky quality.
- » Install or retrofit lighting in the core area to make it dark sky friendly (note that this does not apply to privately owned properties within a reserve, although encouraged) and follow

## AUSTRALIA'S DARK SKY PLACES

### QUEENSLAND

The Jump-Up Dark Sky Sanctuary (14 km<sup>2</sup>)

Winton Dark Sky Community (53,814 km<sup>2</sup>)

### NEW SOUTH WALES

Kestrel Nest EcoHut Dark Sky Lodging

Palm Beach Headland Urban Night Sky Place (0.62 km<sup>2</sup>, including part of Ku-ring-gai Chase NP)

Warrumbungle Dark Sky Park (233.12 km<sup>2</sup>, Australia's first Dark Sky Park)

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Arkaroola Wilderness Dark Sky Sanctuary (630 km<sup>2</sup>)

River Murray Dark Sky Reserve (3200 km<sup>2</sup>, including Swan Reach CP)

*The "core" of the proposed Sunshine Coast Reserve would centre on the council-owned Kirbys Road Environment Reserve but also overlaps several protected areas.*

## WHY A SUNSHINE COAST DARK SKY RESERVE?

This high-altitude, eco-friendly hinterland region with its horizon studded by the Glass House Mountains reveals up to 4000 stars at night and a clear view of the Milky Way. Council polls showed that more than 90% of the residents asked supported the idea.

cost and operational burden, and any new infrastructure would need to be compliant, the process would result in less intrusive, more energy-efficient and wildlife-friendly lighting, reducing the ecological footprint of the region.

Resources to help manage visitor safety after dark, such as stargazing platforms, bollards to prevent falls from vantage points or cliff lines in low light may be needed, as well as increased overtime budgets for Rangers. Park management is never confined to daylight hours, but if Queensland's Dark Sky Reserves continue to increase and incorporate tracts of land and sky already prescribed as protected areas, the number of Rangers required to patrol them, and the flexible overtime structures to support Rangers, must be increased in turn.

As we head towards the 2032 Olympic Games, we shouldn't have to "wish upon | a star" that our protected areas will receive the necessary funds to truly awe ecotourists, whether by daylight or by starlight. ■

*KARIN COX is NPAQ's Marketing and Communications Manager. She has also been a natural history editor and author for more than 25 years, working with Steve Parish Publishing, New Holland Publishing, Wildlife Australia magazine, and Australian Geographic Books.*



TOP: Night falls over River Murray Dark Sky Reserve. © Kwest19/Dreamstime.com.  
BOTTOM: Space seen from Warrumbungles Dark Sky Park, NSW. © Tatters/Flickr

the Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting.

- » Practice audience outreach, educate others about the certification category and the need for Dark Sky Places and collaborate with other Dark Sky Places.
- » Document their efforts and include them in a Place Annual Report.

There's little doubt that adopting the light-friendly principles observed by Dark Sky Places helps protect nocturnal species and environments, but it also aims to increase nighttime visitation. Protected area managers must weigh the pros against the possible cons: reduced compliance under the cover of darkness and the challenge of maintaining visitor safety in low-light conditions.

Currently, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service assesses each park against a Values-Based Management Framework, developing custom management strategies based on natural and cultural values. Where dark sky preservation is a key value, preserving it is incorporated into park management plans, as for Bowling Green Bay NP and Mon Repos Conservation Park.

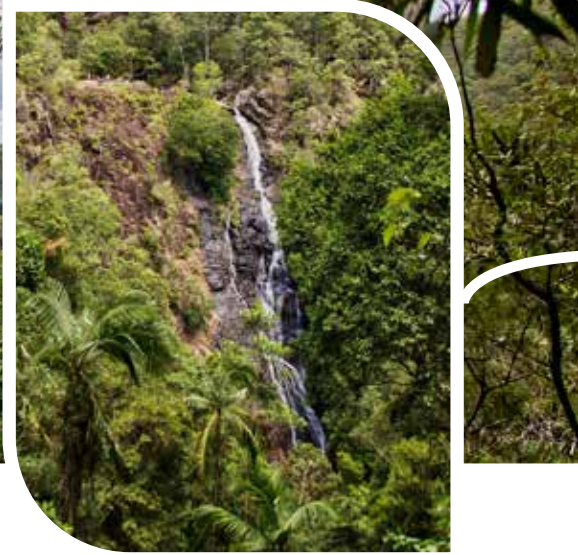
From a visitor experience perspective, as clear winter nights are most favourable for starwatching, Dark Sky Reserves or Parks may present a novel opportunity for off-season ecotourists to engage with protected areas in new ways, spreading visitor numbers more evenly through the seasons.

While altering lighting to reduce ecological and astronomical light pollution may seem like an additional

# PARK IN FOCUS

## Kondalilla NP

Karin Cox



ABOVE LEFT: View from the Picnic Creek Circuit Lookout. © Tatters/Flickr.  
ABOVE RIGHT: Kondalilla Falls, where Skene Creek plummets 90 m into a rainforested valley. © Tatters/Flickr.



~104 km north of Brisbane along the Bruce Highway (M1), take Steve Irwin Way Exit 163.



Use a slow shutter speed for smooth pics of the falls and a diffuser for views from lookouts.



No vehicle access camping. Flaxton Walker's Camp, is a bush camp for SCGW participants. Nearby camps in Mapleton NP.



Short & long walks.



Toilets and picnic tables are available.



**SIZE & NAME:** 1591 ha. First protected in 1906 as a small recreational area known as Bon Accord Waterfall, the name was changed to Kondalilla (said to mean “rushing waters” in the language of the Kabi Kabi people) when it became a NP in 1945. Reserves and state forestry were added over time, linking it to Obi Obi NP in 1988.

**GEOLOGY:** Kondalilla's ancient, rugged escarpments owe much to volcanism, with rhyolitic soils formed 235 million years ago. Younger basalt soils, laid down 30 million years ago, nourish the denser, lush subtropical rainforest of the gullies.

**HABITATS:** Tall eucalypt and casuarina forests blanket the escarpment, with an understorey of grass-trees and stately ancient conifers known as bunya pines (*Araucaria bidwillii*). Picabeen palms, vines and fruiting trees dot the subtropical rainforest of the damp valleys, watered by impressive cascades.

**CULTURE & HISTORY:** From 1842–1860, this area was part of a reserve to protect bunya pines, a major source of food and festivity for the Kabi Kabi and Wakka Wakka First Nations people. Triennial Bonyee Festivals drew people from coastal and inland regions to share food, songs, dances, and intercultural custom. During WWII, the park's steep terrain was used to help train local Australian Army battalions who would later fight in the jungles of New Guinea.

**FLORA, FAUNA & FUNGA:** The vulnerable bopple nut (*Macadamia ternifolia*) clings on in the park. Kondalilla NP is also a sanctuary for frogs. These include the pouched frog (*Assa darlingtoni*)—males of which carry their tadpoles in a pouch; the vulnerable cascade tree-frog (*Litoria pearsoniana*) and tusked

frog (*Adelotus brevis*); and the endangered giant barred frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*). More than 70 reptile species and 109 bird species inhabit the park. The endangered Mary River cod (*Maccullochella mariensis*) also survives in nearby water catchments. Vibrant *Entoloma virescens* fungi and bioluminescent green pepe (*Mycena chlorophos*) have been recorded.

**ACTIVITIES:** Kondalilla draws visitors to its icy pools, splendid waterfalls, and shaded picnic areas and walking tracks. Short walks include the 1.7-km **Picnic Creek Circuit**, and the thigh-busting 4.7-km **Kondalilla Falls Circuit**, with 300-odd stairs to rockpools. The fit and fearless can challenge themselves on the 4-day, 58-km, **Sunshine Coast Great Walk** (permits apply) through Kondalilla, Mapleton Falls and Mapleton NPs, and others may opt for shorter walks off the trail, such as the 2.2-km return **Narrows Lookout** or 4.4-km return **Baroon Lookout**.

Information is correct at time of printing, but check Park Alerts ([parks.qld.gov.au/park-alerts](http://parks.qld.gov.au/park-alerts)) for updates before each visit.



Cascade tree-frog (*Litoria pearsoniana*).  
© Ken Griffiths/Dreamstime.

# NPAQ MOMENTS IN TIME

*NPAQ Archives*

**‘WE COME AND GO, BUT THE LAND IS ALWAYS HERE.’ — WILLA CATHER**

For this section of this issue, we’d been in contact with Margaret J. Moorhouse to write about her family history with NPAQ on the Clelland side. Sadly, Margaret (aka Peggy Hyde) passed away before this issue came to fruition.

Margaret’s mother, Marjorie, was a Clelland, and her uncles Allen and Wallace were instrumental to the early establishment of NPAQ’s activities program. Her uncle Wallace served as Secretary for many years before enlisting in the AIF in WWII, and his brother Allen Clelland gave the inaugural Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture in 1969. Their efforts were honoured in the NPAQ 50 years review. Margaret often wrote to remind us to uphold core values enshrined by earlier generations of NPAQ members and leaders. She will be missed.



LEFT: R. Allen Clelland gave the first ever Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture, in 1969. Excerpts of his speech and mentions of the Clelland family in NPA News are shown below.

© NPA News

The Association and its members remember with gratitude the skill, endurance, uncanny sense of locality and leadership displayed by our Outings Committee members. I’m confident that present younger Outings Leaders, as well as members generally, would want me to record in this 50 year review, the names of pioneer Field Outing Leaders — Arthur Groom, Romeo Lahey, Allen and Wallace Clelland in the 1930’s and later Ross Bulgin, Dryden Lennard, Bert Anderson, Edgar Kemp, Cliff Bell, who over many years led, and two are still taking, members far and wide in Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales and on extended annual field trips.

When I was asked to give a talk on the early days of the National Parks Association of Queensland, I did not anticipate that it would become the first “Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture”. Indeed, I feel greatly honoured that this is so, and hope that I can make some small contribution to the progress of Romeo’s ideals of service to future generations through National Parks. He was a devoted, unselfish idealist, and my years of association with him enriched my own life.

**Glasshouse Mountains.** There were a number of trips by members to the Glasshouses before we had an official outing – in fact, before the National Parks Association was formed. Incidentally, Crookneck was climbed in the moonlight one night by Bert Salmon, Marjorie Parkinson (now Mrs. Clelland) and Jean Easton. Bert Salmon and myself made the first ascent of the eastern side of Tibrogargan in 1927, and like all first climbs, it was extremely difficult and both of us nearly lost our lives. I will refer to this episode again later.

Except for a period of seven months in 1937, when Murray Cox was secretary, my brother, Wallace, was Secretary to the Association from 29th July, 1935 until his enlistment in the A.I.F. in 1940. He died a few years ago from war disabilities. Lamington and the O’Reilly family: No reference to Lamington is complete without the O’Reilly family, and one has only space for a limited reference here, but their history is fully recorded elsewhere. In those early days, the only approach to the summit...

National Parks provide an essential reserve for many purposes, including the Botanist and Entomologist and general study of the balance of nature. The existing parks are of considerable economic value because they return rich dividends in tourism, apart from the essential pleasure and healthy recreation of thousands of people.

Attached are some brief notes on the value of tourism extracted from “The Current Affairs Bulletin” of November, 1967, which was published by the Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

The members of the N.P.A. are engaged in an essential community job for which there will be increasing appreciation and value as the years slip by. You will frequently have to fight hard against short-term-money-making interests who misrepresent exploration as development and progress. Never give up – and the community will benefit from your work in richer living and, on the purely mercenary side, there is more profit from long-range tourism and health benefits than short-term exploitation.

## VALE MARGARET J MOORHOUSE

Margaret was an NPAQ member, frequent correspondent, and a passionate advocate for protected areas. She was actively engaged in conservation, both with the North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) and as President of the Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook (ASH). As Sheena Gillman from Protect the Bush Alliance wrote of her passing: ‘She was brave and faithful to the cause, calling upon many to simply do a better job.’



ABOVE: Margaret Moorhouse, a committed conservationist with a family association with NPAQ. © Helen Keogh

LEFT: Wallace Clelland. © Margaret J. Moorhouse



# 10 FACTS ABOUT US NATIONAL PARKS

*World Explorer Stats*

IT'S NO SECRET THAT NATIONAL PARKS IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN HIT WITH ALARMING SPENDING CUTS. But, just as they are here, National Parks are vital for both biodiversity and for leisure and tourism. Formed with the aim of cultivating a sustainable, rich and biodiverse environment for the flora and fauna that call the parks home, these natural havens have played a pivotal role in the survival of countless endangered species in North America. And in 2024 alone, more than 300 million people made the trip to one of the 63 National Parks across the US, many of them to see the wildlife they protect. So, it's time for some good news about US National Parks, with 10 facts about their role in biodiversity and conservation, from World Explorer Facts.

## FACT 1

**Invasive plant species have been reduced by more than 57,000 acres.**

Invasive plant species can damage the landscape of National Parks, taking over completely and destroying the habitats of wildlife.

At its peak, it was thought that as many as 2.6 million acres of US National Parks were taken over in some way by invasive

species. While there's still more that needs to be done to take back these green areas, reports suggest 57,000 acres are now controlled, with invasive species reduced to levels that local park staff can better manage and monitor.

## FACT 2

**More than 21,000 acres were acquired in 2022.** There's also more being done to expand the existing remit of a lot of parks. In total, 21,345 acres were acquired at a gateway property in Zion National Park, white sand beaches in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and remote lakefronts at Voyageurs National Park. These efforts ensure that more land is being brought under the control and protection of the National Parks Service (NPS), ensuring flora and fauna are kept safe, while giving visitors more areas to explore.

## FACT 3

**77% of visitors say wildlife is their main motivation for visiting a US National Park.** While the serene natural landscapes parks have to offer cannot be overlooked, an overwhelming majority of people actually cite the wildlife on show as one of their main reasons for visiting. A study of parkgoers at Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks found that as many as 77% of people came with the intention of spotting a rare animal.

ABOVE: A sweeping view of Grand Teton National Park washed by twilight.  
© Kwiktok/Dreamstime

## FACT 4

**People are willing to pay more to see larger carnivores.** For most sites, drawing in a crowd is important. While visitors need to be kept at levels which ensure the safety of local flora and fauna, footfall is nonetheless a huge aspect of finding the funds needed to keep these sites running. It's interesting to note then that 50% of people surveyed said they'd pay more to enter a park to see large carnivores, such as the ever-popular grizzly bear.

## FACT 5

**US\$581m is brought in annually in just two parks—Yellowstone NP and Grand Teton NP—thanks to wildlife visitors.** That 77% figure means that of the total US\$753m these parks generated in earnings per year, a staggering US\$581m came from the desire to see wildlife. This fascinating balance between the need to preserve wildlife for their own sake, and the commercial element of trying to encourage the growth of certain species within the park is one that has the potential to leave a lot of visitors morally torn.

## FACT 6

### Conservation efforts are saving grey wolves in Yellowstone NP.

These efforts have already started to have tangible impacts across some of the USA's most famous parks. In Yellowstone, 41 wolves were reintroduced to the park from Canada during the 1990s. The total number of wolves in the park as of December 2024 was 108. These wolves have led to a natural and healthy reduction in elk numbers, which has in turn allowed willow and aspen trees to survive to maturity and restore dense groves of vegetation across the park.

## FACT 7

### Water conservation has been at the forefront of work in the Everglades since 1947.

The Everglades is a subtropical ecosystem that provides drinking water and irrigation for people across the city of Florida. The Everglades National Park was created in

1947 to protect this vital and vast body of water, which once spanned 17702 km of Florida. The park has also served as a haven for the Florida panther and the American alligator.

## FACT 8

### Great Smoky Mountains National Park is protecting the black bear population.

In 1934, it was believed that there were just 100 black bears left in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park region. Thanks to the protection and conservation practices of the park and its staff, estimates now put this number as high as 1,900 bears. This massive increase is a testament to the hard work of the park's team, and has a massive positive impact on the local ecosystem—with bears naturally able to support factors such as scavenging carcasses and dispersing seeds.

## FACT 9

### The Devils Hole pupfish is seeing a resurgence.

Death Valley National Park is the only known home of the famous Devils Hole pupfish. But when three back-to-back earthquakes struck the region between December 2024 and July 2025, the future of the species was put in serious danger. Despite that, ongoing efforts since 1990 have meant that the pupfish has a great chance of survival, with the species receiving a 25-year high count number during spring of 2024.

## FACT 10

### Conservation efforts have the strong backing of US citizens.

Encouragingly, local residents and citizens of the USA are strongly behind the work that parks are putting in to protect flora and fauna. A Harris Poll, on behalf of the US National Parks Conservation Association, found that a healthy 86% of those asked supported federal efforts to continue to protect threatened and endangered species across all 63 national parks in the country. 87% of people went on to suggest migration corridors were one of the most effective ways to encourage the continued connectivity of existing wildlife habitats. ■

*US NATIONAL PARKS exist to preserve, cherish and celebrate wonderful ecosystems and biodiverse environments. If you have a trip to the US planned, be sure to include one of the many rich, diverse US National Parks on your itinerary.*

*Read more stats about US National Parks at [www.originaltravel.co.uk/us-national-park-conservation-stats](http://www.originaltravel.co.uk/us-national-park-conservation-stats)*



LEFT: A black bear and cubs in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.  
© William Wise/ Dreamstime.

# A ROCKY PAST

## New discoveries for rock wallabies in protected areas

Christopher Laurikainen Gaete,  
Anthony Dosseto & Dr Scott Hocknull

CHRISTOPER LAURIKAINEN GAETE,  
ANTHONY DOSSETO & SCOTT HOCKNULL first  
published this piece in THE CONVERSATION.

Read more at [bit.ly/4baAQts](https://bit.ly/4baAQts)

**MODERN ROCK WALLABIES SEEM TO SURVIVE BY STICKING TOGETHER IN SMALL AREAS. FOSSILS SHOW THEY NEED TO TRAVEL, WRITE PALAEOANTHROPOLOGIST SCOTT HOCKNULL AND COLLEAGUES IN THE CONVERSATION.**

Today, rock wallabies are seen as secretive cliff-dwellers that rarely stray far from the safety of their rocky shelters. But the fossil record tells a very different story.

New research suggests rock wallabies once travelled more, moving across country in search of new habitat. These wandering wallabies, including one that travelled over 60 km, were far more mobile than other kangaroos at the time, even their giant extinct cousin *Protemnodon*. These findings reshape our understanding of how rock wallabies interact with their environment and how they may respond to the increasingly fragmented landscapes of modern Australia.

### HOMEBOODIES BY NATURE

Modern rock wallabies spend their days sheltering in rocky caves, crevices, and boulder piles, emerging at dusk to feed. They have tiny home ranges, often less than 0.2 km<sup>2</sup>.

Rock wallabies aren't fussy eaters, eating leaves and shoots from grasses or shrubs that grow near their rocky refuges. This has led to the assumption that they don't travel far, sticking together in small groups on isolated habitats. Why travel far when everything you need is right outside your shelter?

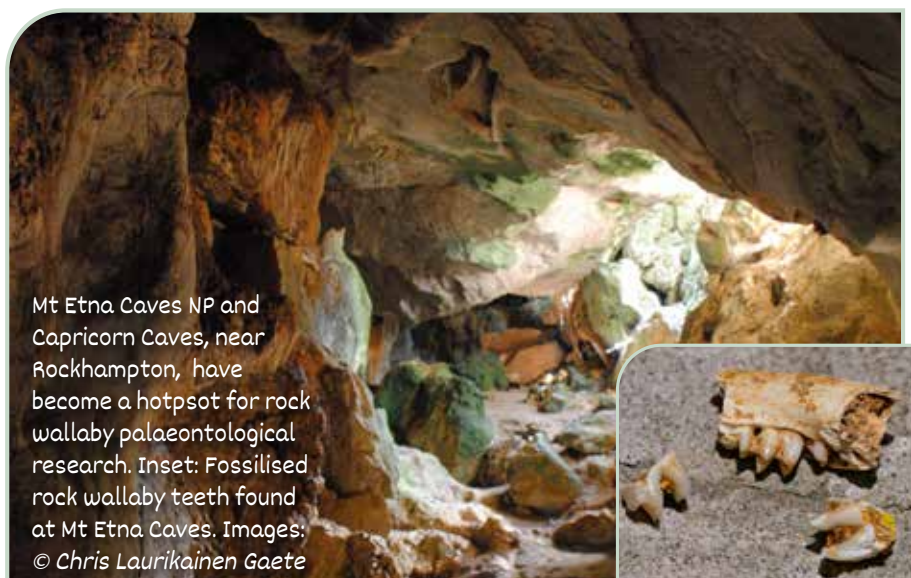
[The team] saw the same pattern in the rock wallabies' distant cousin, the giant forest wallaby, *Protemnodon*, which had small ranges despite their much larger bodies.

Male rock wallabies have been observed occasionally dispersing up to 8 km between colonies. While such movements are rare, they may play a crucial role in maintaining gene flow between populations.

Rock wallabies occur in isolated regions across much of mainland Australia, from the Cape York rock wallaby at the northern tip of Australia, to the yellow-footed rock wallaby of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia, and west to the Rothschild's rock wallaby in the Pilbara, Western Australia. This broad distribution raises intriguing questions. Were rock wallabies once more mobile than they seem today? And if so, can we see evidence of that movement in the fossil record?

### MOUNT ETNA CAVES

North of Rockhampton, Mount Etna Caves NP sits right in the heart of rock wallaby country. Rich fossil deposits provide a window into the past 500,000 years, revealing how kangaroos once lived.



Mt Etna Caves NP and Capricorn Caves, near Rockhampton, have become a hotspot for rock wallaby palaeontological research. Inset: Fossilised rock wallaby teeth found at Mt Etna Caves. Images: © Chris Laurikainen Gaete

From these deposits, [the team] examined fossils from kangaroos of all sizes—from tiny pademelons (*Thylogale* spp.), to the human-sized megafauna forest wallaby (*Protemnodon*). This let [them] compare how far different-sized kangaroos travelled. Did small species stay close to home while the largest roamed?

To answer these questions, they turned to clues hidden in teeth. When kangaroos eat, unique chemical signatures (strontium isotopes) become locked in their enamel.

Because enamel forms early in life and doesn't change, the strontium preserved in an animal's teeth can tell us where it grew up. At Mount Etna Caves, there is no evidence kangaroo remains were brought there by predators to eat. So, the team could be confident the patterns seen in their teeth reflect real movements during the animal's lifetime.

The results showed that regardless of size, most

kangaroos were locals. Rock wallabies showed strong site fidelity, foraging less than 1 km from the caves where their fossilised remains were found.

This strong attachment to rocky shelter mirrors modern species observations. Even as the environment changed over hundreds of thousands of years, most rock wallabies maintained small home ranges.

## THE TRAVELLERS

While most rock wallabies kept close to the caves, a few individuals at Mount Etna Caves were born elsewhere. Some originated 8 km north near Mount Yaamba, and others around 15 km south, near Mount Archer.

But the most surprising case was an adventurous individual that travelled at least 65 km, crossing mountains, floodplains, and even the Fitzroy River—prime crocodile country. This is the first direct evidence of long-range travel in an individual rock wallaby.

While movements over these kinds of distances

haven't been observed in rock wallabies today, genetic evidence from short-eared rock wallabies shows some connection between colonies separated by 67 km.

This suggests that, although most rock wallabies stay local, a small number of travellers leave their birthplace in search of new habitat. These rare long-distance dispersers would play an important role in keeping populations connected. Because this dispersal happens beyond the timeframes of human observation, without the fossil record we wouldn't know this crucial part of rock wallaby natural history.

## MODERN IMPLICATIONS

Importantly, these results also show fossil wallabies were dispersing from areas still home to rock wallabies today. Unadorned rock wallabies still live around Mount Etna and Capricorn Caves, with another colony in Mount Archer NP. To the west, Herbert's rock wallaby occupies outcrops outside Westwood. Isotopic evidence tells us that, in the past, these three groups were not isolated pockets but part of larger interconnected populations.

We don't know whether rock wallabies are still trying to make these journeys. But with major roads and development dividing the landscape, humans might inadvertently be creating barriers for these crucial dispersal events. Fossil and genetic evidence shows rock wallaby populations shouldn't be viewed as isolated colonies, but as part of a wider network that relies on long-distance dispersal. Recognising this is vital if we want these rock-loving, wandering wallabies to thrive in an increasingly urbanised environment. ■

## ROCK WALLABY FACTS

Australia has some 17 species of rock wallaby in the genus *Petrogale*; however, hybridisation zones exist and taxonomic studies are continually refining our understanding of these marsupials. At least 11 species are found in Queensland, including the endangered Prosperine rock wallaby and Cape York rock wallaby, and the vulnerable brush-tailed rock wallaby, yellow-footed rock wallaby, purple-necked rock wallaby and Sharman's rock wallaby. Many species face pressure from land clearing and fragmentation, as well as predation by invasive red foxes, feral cats and dogs.



ABOVE: Brush-tailed rock wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*).  
© Chris Laurikainen Gaete.

# WILDLIFE FEATURE

## Green python

*The Editor*

### SCIENTIFIC NAME:

*Morelia viridis*

**DISCOVERY:** This species underwent several nomenclature changes since German naturalist Hermann Schlegel first described an Indonesian type specimen in 1872.

**STATUS:** Near threatened in Queensland. This beautiful, arboreal python is often a target for wildlife traffickers.

**SIZE:** Usually 150–180 cm, but females grow larger and may reach 200 cm.

**HABITAT:** Wet, closed forest such as in Queensland's Wet Tropics, where it exists in three isolated populations, mostly within protected areas. This

python is not endemic to Australia, being found in West Papua and New Guinea, where deforestation for the palm oil trade threatens its habitat.

**DIET:** A patient predator, it descends from the trees at night to hunt for other reptiles, and, for mature specimens, small mammals.

**BREEDING:** Females lay a clutch of 6 to 32 eggs in the winter, coiling around them and incubating them for 7.5 weeks. Hatchlings are yellow or brick-red in colour, becoming green as they moult and reach sexual maturity. They disperse immediately on hatching, with no maternal care.

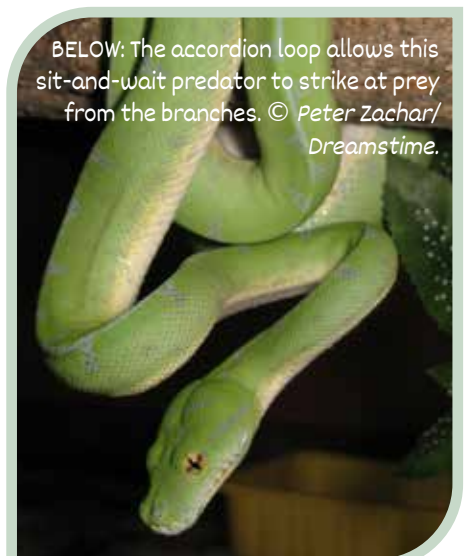


TOP: The nocturnal green python spends most of the day in the trees in this "saddle resting coil", conserving energy to hunt. © David Clode/Unsplash. ABOVE: Juveniles are yellow or a rich brick red. © Milan Vachal/Dreamstime.

The green python is well-camouflaged in its rainforest home and relies on stealth to survive. To hunt prey, this muscular reptile moves from an inert resting saddle coil to a striking position known as an "accordion loop". While the tail remains anchored around the lower branches of a tree, the first third of the body length is folded in a tight, S-shaped loop, like a spring, enabling the python to strike prey on the ground at lightning-fast speeds.

LEFT: Green pythons are non-venomous and despatch their prey by asphyxiation before swallowing it whole. © David Clode/Unsplash. TOP LEFT: Labial pits in this python's lips are thermoreceptors that help the snake create a thermal image of its surrounds and detect the body heat of mammalian prey. © Jens Raschendorf, CC BY-SA 2.5/Wikimedia Commons.

BELOW: The accordion loop allows this sit-and-wait predator to strike at prey from the branches. © Peter Zachar/Dreamstime.



# RANGER SPOTLIGHT

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service

## RANGER TIM SIGNS OFF FOR A TOTALLY WILD RETIREMENT.

Many know Tim Moore, as “Ranger Tim” from Channel 10’s multi-award-winning *Totally Wild* TV program. From 1992 to 2021, the show was beloved afternoon viewing for children and adults alike. There, Ranger Tim and Ranger Stacey bought a love of parks, wildlife and conservation into our lounge rooms, relaying hundreds of conservation stories. This dynamic duo launched the careers of many Rangers and QPWS colleagues and leaves a lasting legacy.

## A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Tim graduated from Gatton Agricultural College with a Diploma of Applied Science (Wilderness Reserves and Wildlife) as a proud “Wildo”. His career as a Park Ranger began in Mount Glorious NP (now D’Aguilar NP), and then St Helena NP.

His enthusiasm, curiosity and wicked sense of humour made him a stand-out talent for connecting with audiences, and he became a household name. His calling was using media—whether television, radio and print, or events, YouTube and social media—to engage the masses and form lasting partnerships. This knack of drawing people together led to his many years coordinating

TOP: Last year, Ranger Tim helped Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service celebrate its 50th anniversary, with Herbie and fellow presenters Ranger Donna and Ranger Stacey, who became household names for their work on *Totally Wild*. RIGHT: Ranger Tim cutting the cake to say goodbye to an incredible career as a QPWS Ranger and respected documentary producer and communications professional.

All © Queensland Government



Brisbane’s World Environment Day parade. Thousands of students and supporters joined him, demonstrating their youthful enthusiasm for protecting our planet.

## TELLING OUR STORIES

One of Queensland’s most influential public advocates for National Parks, Tim was committed to working with First Nations peoples to help tell and preserve their stories. With academic researchers, Tim helped Elder Don Rowlands record his family’s walk through Munga-Thirri NP, gathering knowledge and creating enduring digital records. He also produced documentaries for Channels 7 and 10, including the *World Around Us* program.

Tim played a leading role in marking World Heritage anniversaries for K’gari and Great Sandy NP, and Riversleigh World Heritage Area in Boodjamulla NP (Aboriginal Land), and reunited with Ranger Stacey to coproduce *K’gari Dreaming* on

Country in partnership with the Butchulla People.

## A FACE FOR CHANGE

Ranger Tim led, designed, and fronted many high-profile conservation campaigns, including the Queensland Government’s successful Climate Smart Living and Climate Smart Home Service initiatives.

He won numerous awards and honours, including multiple Queensland Government Awards of Excellence, Premier’s Awards, Queensland Government Australia Day Awards, and the prestigious Public Service Medal for outstanding contribution to environmental education through innovative use of media. But, to us, he will always be “Ranger Tim”—the approachable, engaging and passionate Ranger who always spoke up for conservation, always looked for innovative ways to work together, and always created space for others to tell their stories. And who leaves very big boots to fill. ■

## MAJOR EVENTS

### ROMEO LAHEY MEMORIAL LECTURE

**DATE:** Sat 9 May 2026

**VENUE:** Kedron Room,  
City Hall, Brisbane

**TIME:** 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**ORGANISER:** Donna  
McCosker

## GET INVOLVED

Come and lead a small group or workshop at an upcoming Park of the Month event in 2026. We're seeking experienced guides for bushwalks, conservation group leaders, bushcraft experts, wellbeing practitioners and creative artists with a nature focus. Please express your interest by completing the online form at <https://wkf.ms/4n6zCDq>

## WHAT'S ON?

### NPAQ EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Our Activities Committee organises low-cost outdoors activities for members and non-members. To get involved, contact the relevant activity leader or register at [npaq.org.au](http://npaq.org.au)

#### COOCHIEMUDLO IS - DAY WALK

**DATE:** 28 April 2026

**MEET:** 8:30 am, Masters Ave,  
Victoria Point

**COST:** \$5 (pay on day)

Bring enclosed shoes, hat,  
sunscreen, water, binoculars,  
camera, insect repellent and  
morning tea.)

**LEADER:** Frank Freeman  
(0427 655 514)

#### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GROUP

**DATE:** 23 May 2026

**MEET:** 9 am, Jollys Lookout  
Lower Carpark, D'Aguiar NP

**COST:** Free

**LEADER:** Angus McElnea  
(0429 854 446)

#### MAY PARK OF THE MONTH

**DATE:** 30 May 2026

**MEET:** 8:00 am – 12:30 pm,  
Venman Bushland NP  
(Redlands)

**COST:** Free

See [bit.ly/QldPOTM](http://bit.ly/QldPOTM)

#### BIRDWATCHING - DOWSE LAGOON

**DATE:** 24 May 2026

**MEET:** 7:30 am, 169 Brighton  
Rd, Sandgate

**COST:** \$5 (bring enclosed  
shoes, hat, sunscreen, first aid  
kit, binoculars, camera, chair,  
repellent, morning tea  
& lunch).

**LEADER:** Mary Anne Ryan  
(0436 393 999)

## JOIN OUR BIOBLITZES

**CALLING ALL CITIZEN SCIENTISTS, NATURE-LOVERS  
AND KEEN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHERS! HELP US  
COLLECT VALUABLE DATA.**

Anyone can participate in NPAQ's monthly BioBlitzes, which form part of our Park of the Month program.

Each month, we run a month-long BioBlitz in our chosen Parks Connect Park of the Month.

- » Simply visit our Park of the Month at any time over the course of the month and photograph the fauna, flora and fungi you see. You don't even need a camera—a smart phone will do the job.
- » Upload your images to iNaturalist (free to join) and add them to our Parks Connect BioBlitz project.
- » Add your photos to the project with a CC license (CCO, CC BY or CCNC) for your chance to win an online gift card and have your image shared in *Protected* magazine.

LEFT: Lyrebird. [TracieLouise/CanvaNFP](#)



ABOVE: Blue-banded bee.  
© [Rahmatmuddinamirullah/](#)  
[Dreamstime.](#)

# BECOME A MEMBER AND SUBSCRIBE

LEFT: Northern leaf-tail gecko. Aussiesnakes/Dreamstime.

BELOW: Lauren Hicks with Paula from Bunnings Warehouse Burleigh Waters. NPAQ/Parks Connect.

NPAQ members receive a suite of benefits, including copies of *Protected* magazine.

## YES, I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER...

Register at [npaq.org.au/support-us](http://npaq.org.au/support-us) or return the form below.

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB (DD/MM/YEAR): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SUBURB: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP TYPE

INDIVIDUAL (\$50)     HOUSEHOLD (\$80)

Membership expires on 31 August each year.

### PAYMENT TYPE

MASTERCARD     VISA     CHEQUE     CASH

### NAME ON CARD

\_\_\_\_\_

### CARD NUMBER

EXP   /      CVV/CVC

Please post to: Operations Manager, NPAQ, 9/36 Finchley St, Milton QLD 4064.



Many thanks to Paula from Bunnings Warehouse Burleigh Waters for generously donating gardening supplies for NPAQ's Parks Connect Junior Ranger and Cadet Ranger programs at David Fleay Wildlife Park in April.

Every donation of goods helps us continue to host these great programs and gets more kids outside in nature. If you own or run a business aligned with nature conservation or outdoor activities, consider donating or becoming a corporate sponsor. We'd really welcome your support. Email [admin@npaq.org.au](mailto:admin@npaq.org.au) to discuss.

### DONATE & SAVE

Complimentary individual membership with \$200 donation. Complimentary household membership with donation of \$300 or more. **Donate online at [npaq.org.au/donate](http://npaq.org.au/donate)**



# Held Outside

NATURE CONNECTION EXPERIENCES



[www.heldoutside.com.au](http://www.heldoutside.com.au)



**Forest Bathing, Nature Journaling  
& Environmental Education experiences  
to support our Nature Connection**

- Hour sessions, half day walks & multi-day retreats
- Public, private, groups & one-on-ones, ages 6+
- Kabi Kabi & Jinibara lands, Sunshine Coast region

**small group  
women's retreat  
19 - 22 June**



[bit.ly/QldPOTM](https://bit.ly/QldPOTM)