

# AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

## KAKADU NATIONAL PARK INFORMATION SHEET



### Quick Facts

- Kakadu is 130 Kilometres east of Darwin, in the far tropical north of Australia
- Kakadu is the largest national park in Australia.
- The Indigenous people of Kakadu, known as Bininj/Mungguy, have lived and cared for this special place for thousands of years.
- They believe that during the creation time, ancestral beings such as the Rainbow Serpent and Namarrgon (Lightning Man) journeyed across the landscape creating the landforms, plants, animals and Aboriginal people we see today
- Each of Australia's 17 World Heritage Places are also on Australia's National Heritage List.

### Why is Kakadu National Park of World Heritage value?

Kakadu National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List in three stages beginning in 1981 for its natural and cultural values.

Natural values:

- **It is an excellent example of how living things and the environment are constantly developing**  
Kakadu National Park is an outstanding example of ongoing geological processes, especially the effects of sea-level change in northern Australia, biological evolution and people's interaction with their natural environment.
- **It contains amazing natural formations and features**  
Kakadu National Park stretches over 19,804 km<sup>2</sup> in the Northern Territory, east of Darwin. There is a fantastic variety of landscapes to see from rocky gorges to billabongs, caves, flooded rivers and mangrove swamps.
- **It contains important habitats where endangered plants and animals live**  
There are more than 60 species of mammals, 290 species of birds, 120 species of reptiles, 26 species of frogs, 300 tidal and freshwater fish and 10,000 species of insects. Whether it be the famous salt water crocodile, a brown bandicoot or a barking owl, Kakadu is a wonderful place for wildlife to roam free with minimal human disturbance.

Cultural values:

- **It has unique artistic achievements**  
Cave paintings, rock carvings and archaeological sites help tell the story of how Aboriginal people lived many years ago. Together, Kakadu and Arnhem Land have the greatest number of rock art sites in the world with more than 5000 recorded art sites so far. The paintings are thought to range from 20,000 years old to the recent present and are a fantastic historical record.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of the Environment,**  
**Water, Heritage and the Arts**



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- **It is directly associated with living traditions**

Aboriginal people in Kakadu have lived harmoniously with nature for more than 40,000 years. The cultural obligations handed down by their creation ancestors are still central to their lives.

### **Challenges and Management**

Kakadu is jointly managed by the Board of Management which has an Aboriginal majority representing Traditional Owners and by Parks Australia (a division of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) on behalf of the Director of National Parks.

Challenges	Management
Tourism and management	<p>Aboriginal landowners and Parks Australia work together to enhance and protect Aboriginal rights and interests while looking after the natural and cultural values of the Park. Although Kakadu National Park contributes millions of dollars in tourism, Aboriginal People in Kakadu do not greatly benefit from this. To address this, a range of employment opportunities for Aboriginal people have been introduced.</p> <p>Many Australian and International tourists visit Kakadu National Park and Aboriginal people are proud to share their country and culture with visitors. One issue is finding a balance between providing tourist activity and protecting Aboriginal rights and interests. To manage this, some areas of the Park are set aside for ceremonial activities and hunting and not accessible to the public.</p>
Introduced animals and plants	<p>Asian water buffalo, cattle, pigs, horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, European bees and cane toads are introduced animals present in Kakadu. Introduced animals spread weeds, increase erosion and prey on native animals. In collaboration with Aboriginal traditional owners, a comprehensive program to reduce the number of these animals is in place.</p> <p>Weeds are a significant threat as they decrease food sources and habitats for animals and compete with native plants. Mission grass and gamba grass are two weeds that increase the intensity of fires. Staff use manual weed control programs, biological control techniques and regularly carry out monitoring and research to manage them.</p>
Rock paintings	<p>Tourists are allowed to access three major rock art sites. Kakadu's precious rock paintings are extremely fragile and must be protected from damage caused by people, water, large animals and insects. Tourists must not touch rock paintings, keep to walking tracks and boardwalks and not enter prohibited places. Full-time surveillance is provided at sites where there is a high risk of vandalism. These actions help ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy these rock paintings.</p>

### **Read more**

[www.environment.gov.au/parks/kakadu/](http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/kakadu/)



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