

Djelk

Arnhem Coast, Northern Territory

Declared an Indigenous Protected Area in September 2009



The Djelk Indigenous Protected Area covers more than 673,200 hectares of land and sea country, from the central Arnhem Land plateau to the Arafuran Sea.

The area straddles coastal and sub-coastal landscapes from islands to estuaries, rivers and international renowned wetlands, monsoon rainforests to tropical savannas.

The traditional owners also manage a much wider area of sea country in the Arafuran Sea and are working to expand the Indigenous Protected Area to another 200,000 hectares.

In addition to these intact and biodiversity rich landscapes, the area encompasses the countries of 102 clans representing at least 12 language groups, making the Indigenous Protected Area the heart of a region rich in cultural heritage.

Marine turtles breed on Djelk's coastline and islands, seasonal floodplains provide a home to Arafuran file snakes and saltwater crocodiles, while the mangroves support species including the water mouse and mangrove monitor.

The tropical savannah woodlands provide a home to the Australian bustard, frillneck lizard and the yellow spotted goanna, threatened as a result of the spread of cane toads.

Djelk's sandstone plateaus are thought to contain the richest variety of reptiles in the world with 90 species recorded. A high number of endemic species means Djelk plays a crucial role conserving threatened animals like the Arnhem Land rock-rat, black wallaroo and white-throated grasswren.

The traditional owners arrived at the decision to declare the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area after many years of consultation and negotiation.

The declaration is a formal commitment to manage their land and sea country according to international standards.

They will be building on work they have undertaken since 1991. For the past 18 years, the Djelk Rangers in association with the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and the traditional Aboriginal owners have applied their traditional ecological and cultural knowledge to the task of managing the area.

Their projects include feral pig and buffalo control, weed eradication and traditional fire management.

The Djelk rangers have also become widely recognised for their computer-based monitoring work with other agencies. They monitor and report fishing vessels to Northern Territory Fisheries, undertake patrols for the Australian Customs Service and monitor turtle and dugong habitat.

They are also involved in a fee-for-service arrangement with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, monitoring invertebrates and marine pests as well as monitoring and removing marine debris.

The Djelk rangers also support a junior ranger program operating out of Maningrida High School.

Today there are 23 male and eight female Djelk rangers working on country, supported by the Australian Government as part of Closing the Gap under the Working on Country program.

Like all Australia's Indigenous Protected Areas, Djelk is part of the National Reserve System – our nation's most secure way of protecting native habitat for future generations.

Djelk is Australia's 33rd Indigenous Protected Area. Declared in September 2009, Djelk is managed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category VI, as a protected area with sustainable use of natural resources



For more information about Indigenous Protected Areas, visit www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa

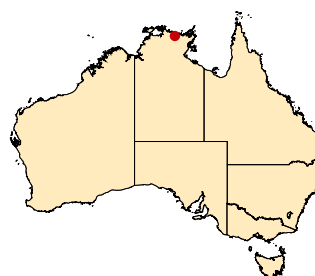


Photo Credits: The photographs used are courtesy of the Djelk Indigenous Protected Area. Front – controlled burn land management. Back – (Left) rangers clean up marine debris. (Right) rock art. (Bottom) aerial photo over Djelk coastal wetlands.

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