

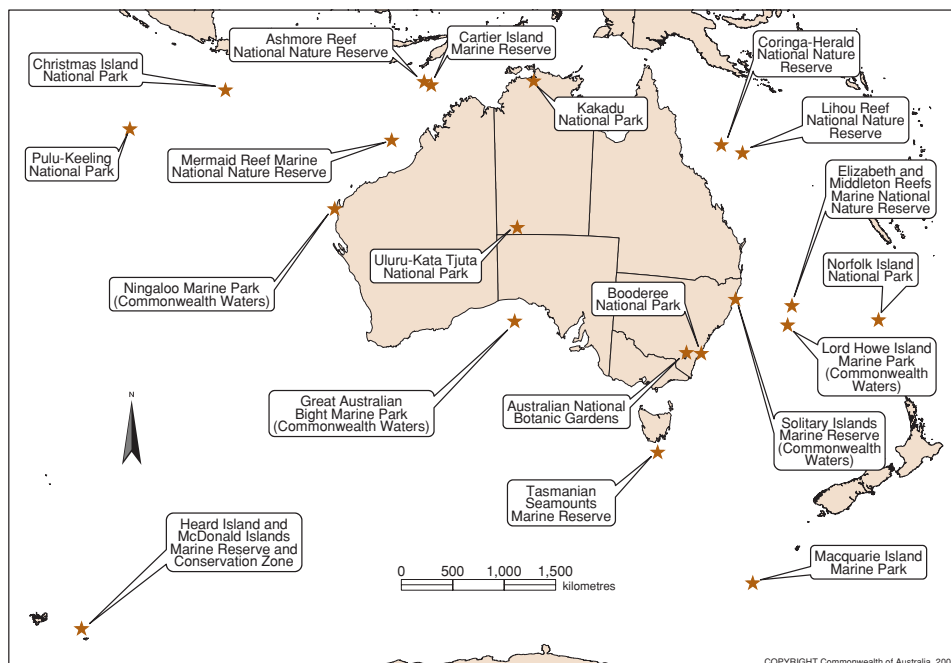
Our mission

To assist the Minister and the Department of the Environment and Heritage in the conservation and appreciation of Australia's biological diversity and associated cultural heritage, through leadership and cooperation in the management of the Australian Government's protected areas.

In 2003–04, the Director of National Parks:

- managed six land based parks, including the jointly managed Booderee, Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta national parks, see pages 64, 73, 79, 95 and 101
- managed two botanic gardens, see pages 57 and 89
- managed 13 marine parks and reserves, see pages 109, 115, 119, 123, 128, 134, 141, 146, 150, 156, 160, 165 and 170
- employed 288 full-time equivalent staff around Australia, see page 191
- recorded a total price of outputs of \$53.022 million, see page 201
- worked on concepts for several new marine protected areas, see page 1.

Figure 1: Locations of Commonwealth parks and reserves managed by the Director of National Parks



Managing the Australian Government's protected areas

Highlights

- A new park lease was signed with the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council, which provides an innovative and challenging framework for progressively contracting out Booderee park management to the local Indigenous community.
- A system of representative marine protected areas for the south-east region of Australia is being developed in close consultation with stakeholders. Consultation was undertaken on two of the 11 broad areas of interest, covering areas of more than 40 000 square kilometres. This process is part of Regional Marine Planning under Australia's Oceans Policy.
- A project commenced with the traditional owners and tourism industry to define a shared vision for future tourism in Kakadu National Park, led by former Australian Tourism Commission Managing Director, John Morse AM. New visitor arrangements were introduced at Twin Falls that incorporate cultural heritage interpretation by Aboriginal guides.
- Ningaloo Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters) has increased in size by 12 per cent following inclusion of former lease areas located within the reserve boundary.
- Major monitoring efforts have been completed in nine of the 13 Commonwealth marine reserves over the past two years to improve information and track major changes.
- Because of the drought, the Australian National Botanic Gardens reduced water use by 25 per cent by improving irrigation management. This met water restrictions during the year, and the gardens participated in a water efficiency campaign at the invitation of the ACT water authority.
- Parks Australia played a significant leadership role in organising the World Parks Congress in September 2003 and in finalising the Protected Area Programme of Work agreed at the 7th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in February 2004. As a contribution to consultation on the marine theme of the congress, Parks Australia commissioned the publication of two background documents for the marine participants.
- Inventories of species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) were prepared for the six terrestrial parks and reserves. These inventories assist in establishing priorities for threatened species management, updating pest management, and identifying research priorities. The initial results indicate a high number of listed species in Norfolk Island National Park and the greatest number of species of conservation significance in Kakadu National Park (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Number of threatened species

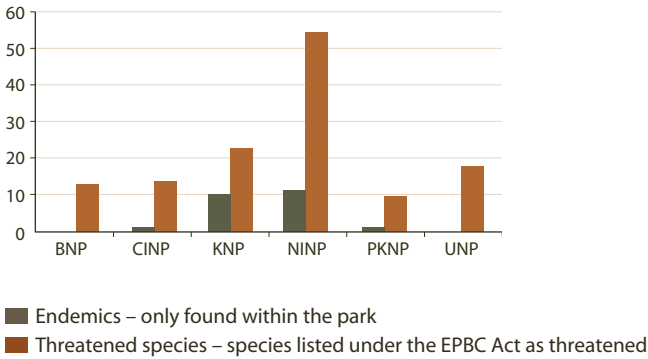
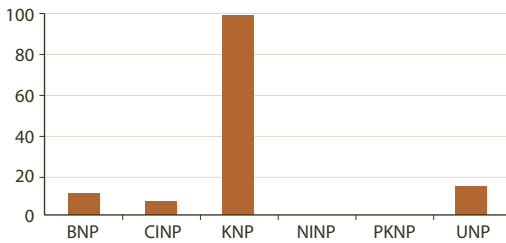


Figure 3: Species of conservation significance not currently listed under the EPBC Act



BNP: Booderee National Park
CINP: Christmas Island National Park
KNP: Kakadu National Park
NINP: Norfolk Island National Park
PKNP: Pulu Keeling National Park
UNP: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

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About this report

This report was prepared in accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The holder of the office of the Director of National Parks is responsible under section 9 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* for the preparation and content of the report of operations in accordance with Finance Minister's Orders.