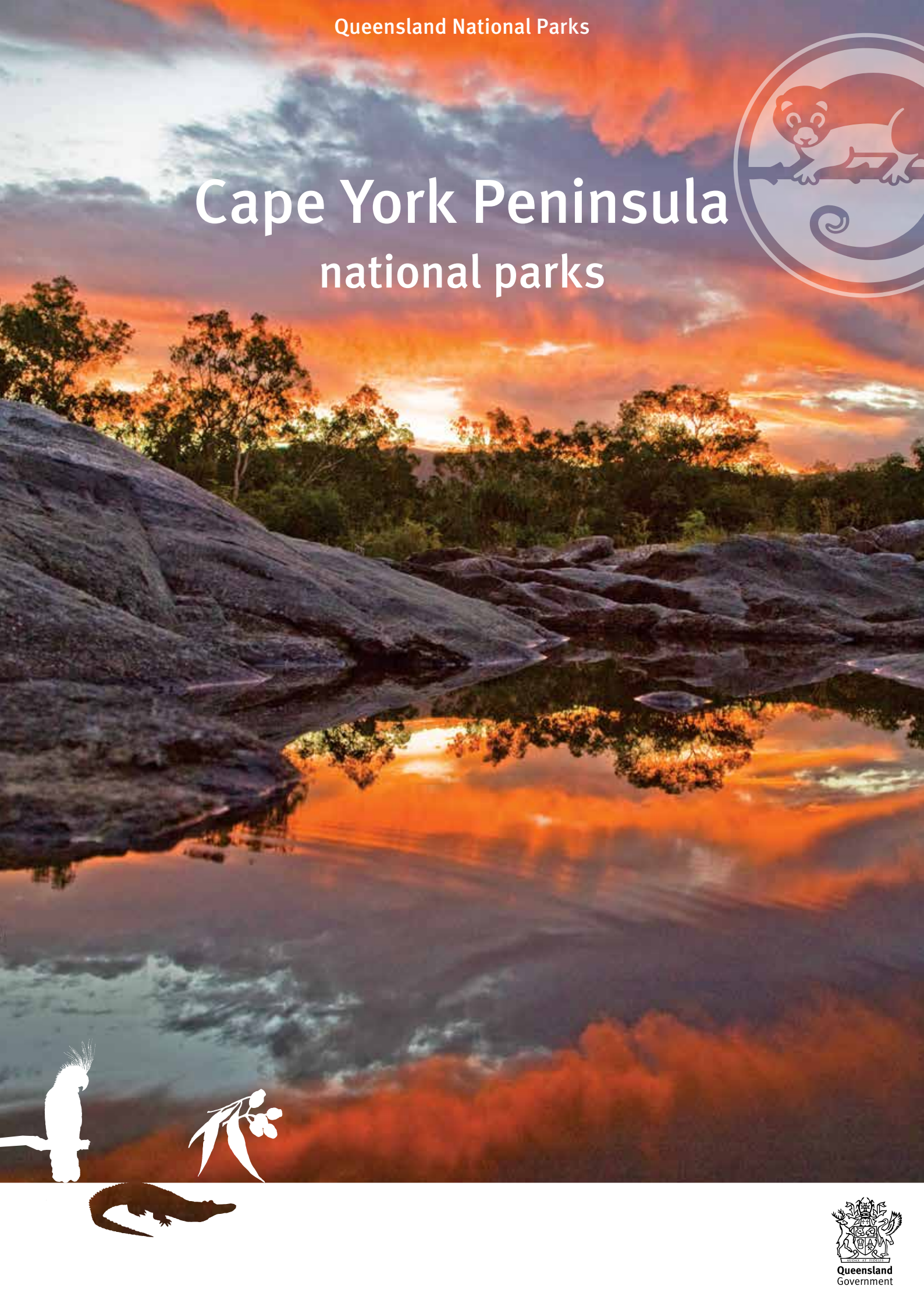












Cape York Peninsula national parks



Contents

- Park facilities 2
- Welcome to 3
- Imagine your journey 5
- Consider camping 6
- Plan your escape 8
- What do you want to see and do? 10
- Choose your route 12
- Parks around Cooktown 14
- Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park (CYPAL) 16
- Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park (CYPAL) 18
- Apudthama National Park (CYPAL) 20
- Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve 22
- Errk Oykangand National Park (CYPAL) 23
- Cape Melville National Park (CYPAL) 24
- Oyala Thumotang National Park (CYPAL) 25
- Journey with confidence 26
- Further information 28

Park facilities

| | Camping  | Ranger base  | Toilets  | Day-use area  | Lookout /viewing platform  | Short walk  | Long walks  | Use of generators permitted  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Kalkajaka NP (CYPAL) | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| Cape Melville NP (CYPAL) | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Errk Oykangand NP (CYPAL) | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Apudthama NP (CYPAL) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ▲ |
| Keatings Lagoon CP | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ▲ |
| Mount Cook NP | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL) | ✓ | ■ | | | | | | ✓ |
| Palmer Goldfield RR | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ▲ |

■ close to park ▲ specified camping areas only

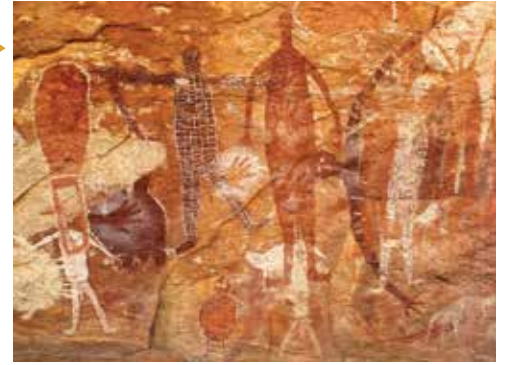
Explore

a vast wilderness on long stretches of dusty roads, with dips and bends, ruts and bull dust and challenging creek crossings.



Experience

a 'cultural landscape', interwoven with significant places, traditional stories and deep spiritual meaning, and sense the strength of Aboriginal peoples' connection to country.



Escape

with family and friends as you immerse yourself in nature in this awe-inspiring landscape, far from everyday distractions.



Celebrate

that exhilarating feeling of reaching The Tip on your epic adventure. Savour the achievement, soak up the view—you're at the very top of Australia!



Encounter

a tantalising history, rich in stories of pioneering spirit and overwhelming hardship, as you follow in the footsteps of many who have gone before.

(Clockwise from top left): Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld; © Tourism and Events Qld; Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld; John Augusteyn © Qld Govt; © Tourism and Events Qld

Welcome to Cape York Peninsula parks and reserves

“As a park ranger and Traditional Owner, I welcome you to 'the cape', on behalf of all the rangers of Cape York. Some of us have cultural and spiritual connections to these parks, some of us have worked here for many years, and all of us are happy to have a yarn, so come and say 'G'day' and we'll give you our tips on where to go and what to do. We hope you have a good experience on 'the cape', and take home good memories. Respect the environment and our cultural places, and come back again!

*Barry Liddie, Ranger,
on behalf of the rangers
of Cape York Peninsula*

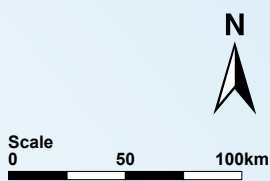
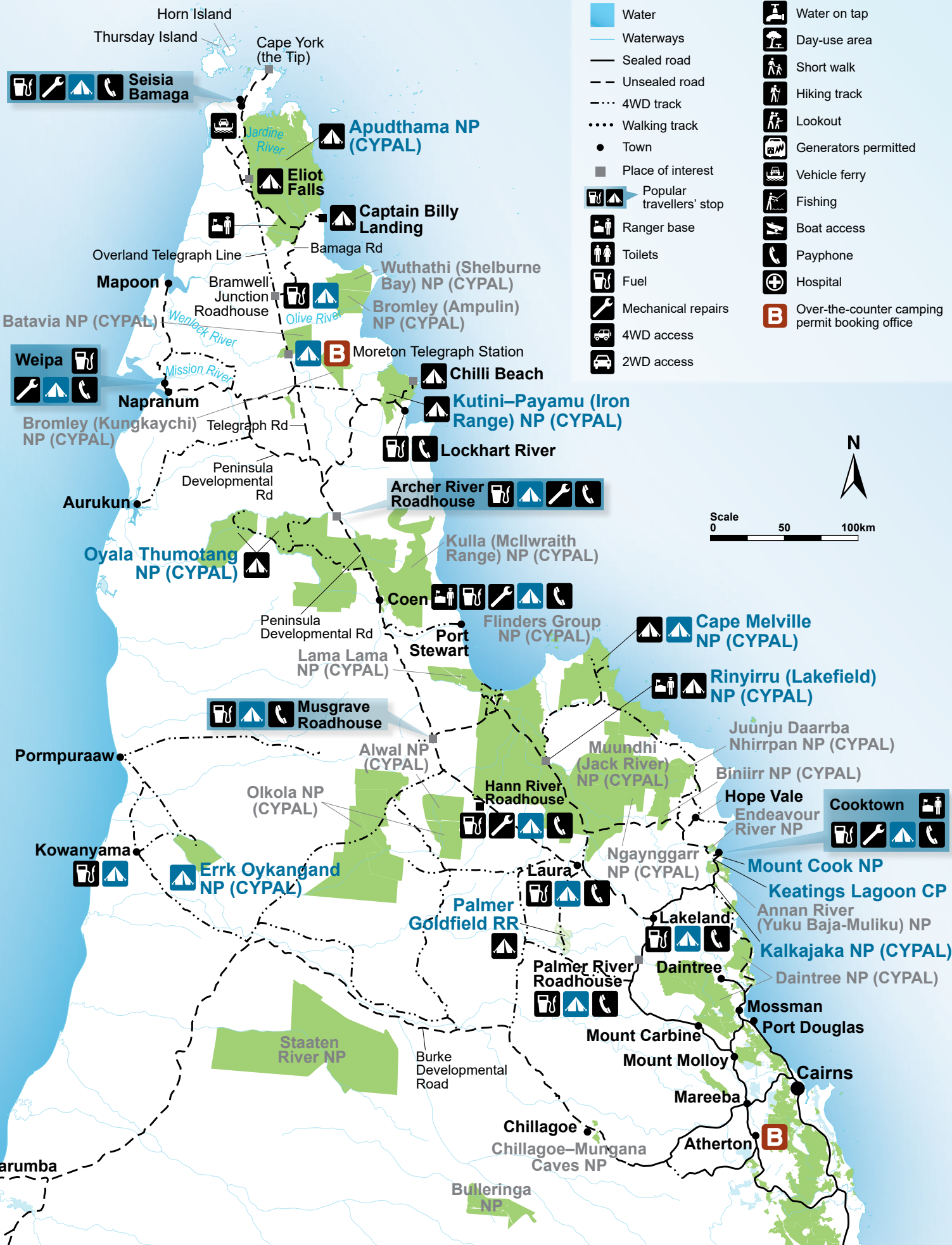


Parks of Cape York Peninsula


Map legend

(these symbols are used throughout this brochure)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | National park |  | Camping |
|  | Conservation park, resources reserve |  | Camping—non national park |
|  | Water |  | Water on tap |
|  | Waterways |  | Day-use area |
|  | Sealed road |  | Short walk |
|  | Unsealed road |  | Hiking track |
|  | 4WD track |  | Lookout |
|  | Walking track |  | Generators permitted |
|  | Town |  | Vehicle ferry |
|  | Place of interest |  | Fishing |
|  | Popular travellers' stop |  | Boat access |
|  | Ranger base |  | Payphone |
|  | Toilets |  | Hospital |
|  | Fuel |  | Over-the-counter camping permit booking office |
|  | Mechanical repairs | | |
|  | 4WD access | | |
|  | 2WD access | | |





Stand at the top of Australia
Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld 

Imagine your journey

Featuring landscapes of unsurpassed beauty and immense diversity, rich with Aboriginal traditions and customs and European history, Cape York Peninsula offers adventure aplenty!

Best time to visit

The dry season, between May and October, is the best time to enjoy Cape York Peninsula. From May to July, maximum temperatures are around 30°C. As the season progresses, the days become hotter and more humid.

The peninsula is busiest between June and September, during the ‘cooler’ weather. School holiday periods (July and September) are best avoided if you seek solitude.

Parks on the peninsula are closed during the wet season from around 1 December until April or May but sometimes as late as August, depending upon weather and road conditions. While the main roads through the peninsula may open from around May, some park access roads are not passable until later in the season. Always check qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts for closures.



Add some local flavour


Experience the ‘real cape’ by visiting local attractions, events and festivals. Choose from museums and cultural centres, rodeos and race carnivals, agricultural and country shows, fishing tournaments and cycling events, and cultural celebrations such as the Laura Dance Festival and Cooktown Discovery Festival. Visit tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/where-to-go/cape-york for more information.

Best ways to visit

The peninsula can be explored on a self-drive journey of discovery, in your own way and in your own time. Use the checklists and itinerary suggestions (pages 8–13) to help plan your ‘adventure of a lifetime’.

If you prefer someone else to do the planning, consider a ‘tag-along’ tour with an experienced guide. If you don’t have the correct vehicle or camping gear, or if you lack the experience or confidence to drive yourself, consider a commercial tour. Tours range from 2–16 days, including fly/drive and drive/cruise options, and cater for special interests such as bird watching and fishing. Visit queensland.com for details of tour providers.



 All roads lead north! (left); Laura Dance Festival (above).
© Tourism and Events Queensland



Consider camping

Sitting by a camp fire and sleeping under the stars is an essential ingredient of your Cape York Peninsula adventure! Consider your camping options before you start planning your trip.

Camping in national parks

National parks camping is very affordable—for the cost of a cuppa, you can sleep in million-star comfort!

Camping opportunities vary from large developed camping areas with all the ‘mod cons’ (well, toilets and showers) to isolated bush camping areas with no facilities. Visit parks.des.qld.gov.au to find your perfect camp site. Go to Find a park and select region (Tropical North Queensland) then select the park features, facilities and interests that meet your camping area needs.

Book camp sites in advance

Once you have found your perfect camp site, you must book your site and purchase a camping permit in advance. If you arrive at a national park without a prior booking or camping permit, you may miss out. Camping in Cape York Peninsula parks is very popular, and many camping areas book out quickly.

- For popular camping areas, such as Chillie Beach and Eliot Falls, book as far in advance as possible.
- For other camping areas, during school holiday periods book at least 2–3 months in advance.

- Outside of holiday periods, book at least several days in advance.

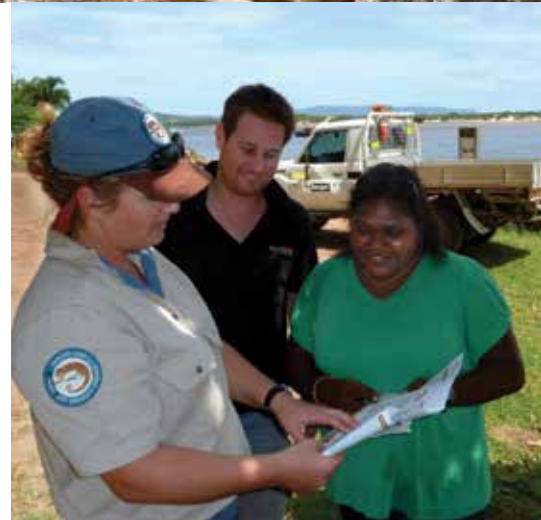
Book online

Book your camp site and obtain your camping permit online, 24/7. Booking online is a simple, five-step process.

1. Visit qld.gov.au/Camping
2. Login or Create Account.
3. Select Camping and find your site.
4. Use a payment card to secure your booking.
5. Record your permit number (for display on your tent/trailer).

What if I don't know my exact dates?

When planning your camping bookings, you may want to allow for bad weather, breakdowns or extending your stay in a place you love. If you are travelling outside of holiday periods, you can afford to be a bit flexible. We still recommend booking as much of your trip as you can before you leave (to avoid disappointment), but where you need flexibility, you can book your sites closer to the time (a few days ahead) while you are on the road (outside of school holidays).



Travel with a detailed road map
© Queensland Government

Travel tips

Check out the camping area maps on the web site to help you choose which camp site you want. Some parks have many sites!

Mobile coverage on the peninsula is limited to large towns so making online bookings is not easy. Create your camping booking account at home before you head off, and book as many nights in advance as you can.

You can change or cancel your booking up to 2 days before your booking date and obtain a refund.

Avoid ghost-bookings! Be considerate of other campers—make sure you cancel your booking if you don't need it!

Make sure you camp in the correct camp site (if sites are numbered) to avoid confusion and conflict.

How do I book while travelling?

You can access the online booking service via your mobile phone or tablet. But because most areas of Cape York Peninsula don't have mobile coverage you need to plan ahead for when and where to make your bookings.

- Take advantage of mobile coverage in towns such as Laura, Lakeland Downs, Cooktown and Coen, and book online before you leave town.
- Use free Wi-Fi in Visitor Information Centres (Mareeba and Cooktown).

What if I can't get online?

If you can't book online:

- visit an over-the-counter permit booking office accepting cash, eftpos and payment cards—Atherton Visitor Information Centre and Moreton Telegraph Station.
- phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68) to book using a payment card or camping credit. Payphones are provided at many roadhouses and in towns.

See map (page 4) for locations of booking offices and payphones.

Camping outside national parks

You can also camp at roadhouses along the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) and in caravan parks in towns such as Lakeland, Laura, Coen and Seisia. Other camping options include stations such as Bramwell and Silver Plains, and Moreton Telegraph Station. Visit tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/where-to-go/cape-york for more information.

Camping equipment

Vehicles and trailers

The main roads through the peninsula—the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) and Telegraph Track Bypass Roads—are graded and have no major river crossings. Access roads into and through national parks are suitable only for 4WD vehicles. To visit the more rugged and remote parks you need a high-clearance 4WD vehicle.

If you are towing a trailer, you need to check which roads are suitable. You need a high-clearance off-road camper trailer to traverse access roads and internal roads in national parks and reserves. Internal park roads and camping areas are not suitable for towing caravans.

If you plan to camp in national parks, check which camping areas and camp sites are accessible for camper trailers, and which can cater for rigs of your size. Visit qld.gov.au/NationalParks, select Find a park or forest, browse by region (Cape York Peninsula) and select Camping and Camper trailer sites.

Gear and supplies

When travelling on the peninsula you need to be self-sufficient with vehicle recovery gear, a basic repair kit and plenty of fuel, food and water.

Fuel and most standard supplies are available in major towns and from roadhouses along the PDR. Limited vehicle repair services are available in Cooktown, Coen, Weipa, Seisia and several roadhouses.

You must carry your own drinking water as drinking water is not available in national parks. Where water taps are provided, the water supply is not suitable for drinking.


Navigation

Carry a detailed map of Cape York Peninsula, such as a HEMA map, in your vehicle; you may also find a GPS useful. Consider purchasing an adventure travel guide to Cape York Peninsula. These comprehensive guides contain detailed road descriptions and useful advice for travellers.

Communication

Mobile phone coverage is generally not available in Cape York Peninsula, although some networks may have service in major towns. Public payphones are provided at several locations. Carry a satellite phone or UHF or HF radio. A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is also advisable in case of emergencies.



 Camping at Horseshoe Lagoon, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) (left); This could be you (above)
© John Augusteyn (left); Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Queensland (above)



Escape to the open road
© Tourism and Events Qld

Plan your escape

Like any challenge, the success of your Cape York Peninsula journey lies in the itinerary detail. Consider these essentials before you go any further.

How long do we need?

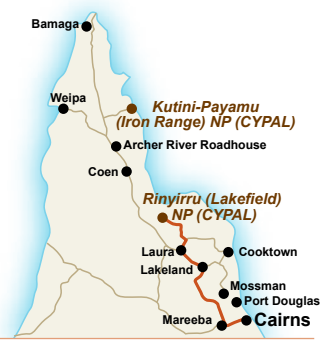
A Cape York Peninsula journey involves a lot of travel! The time you need to travel the 1,000km from Cairns to The Tip depends upon road conditions, not distances.

If you only have 5 days, its best to limit your trip to a park in southern Cape York Peninsula. If you have longer, say 8 days, you could explore southern and central peninsula parks.

You need about 10 days to reach The Tip of Cape York Peninsula and return comfortably. Any less than that means you will be spending most of your time in your vehicle, bumping over corrugations on a long dusty road.

Perhaps you want to explore the roads 'less travelled' or have a special interest such as birdwatching? If so, plan a longer trip of 15 days or more.

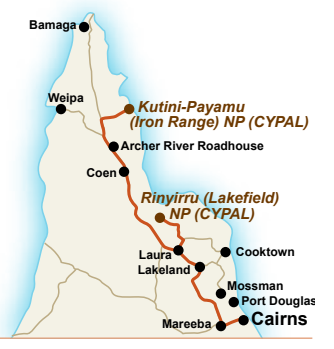
Use these suggested itineraries to help you start 'roughing out' your trip plan.



5-day 'Encounter'

Dip your toe into southern Cape York Peninsula.

| Day | Route | Camp at |
|-------|---|--|
| Day 1 | Cairns/Mareeba to Lakefield ranger base | Central or northern camping areas, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 2 | Rest and explore | Central or northern camping areas, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 3 | Lakefield to Old Laura | Southern camping areas Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 4 | Rest and explore | Southern camping areas Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 5 | Explore Laura, return Cairns/Mareeba | |



8-day 'Explorer'

Explore southern and central Cape York Peninsula.

| Day | Route | Camp at |
|-------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | Cairns/Mareeba to Lakefield | Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 2 | Rest and explore | Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 3 | Lakefield to Coen/Archer River | Coen or Archer River Roadhouse |
| Day 4 | Coen/Archer River to Lockhart River | Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 5 | Rest and explore | Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 6 | Rest and explore | Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 7 | Lockhart River to Archer River/Coen | Archer River Roadhouse or Coen |
| Day 8 | Archer River/Coen to Mareeba/Cairns | |

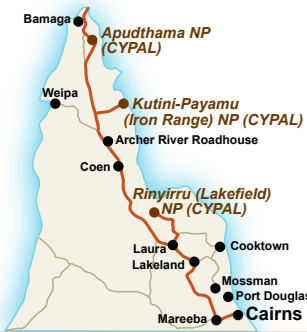


Lotus lily, Red Lily Lagoon, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
© Sarah Jess

10-day 'Epic'

Journey the length of Cape York Peninsula to its northernmost tip.

| | Route | Camp at |
|--------|--|--|
| Day 1 | Cairns/Mareeba to Lakefield | Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 2 | Rest and explore | Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 3 | Lakefield to Coen/Archer River | Coen or Archer River Roadhouse |
| Day 4 | Coen/Archer River to Lockhart River | Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 5 | Rest and explore | Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 6 | Lockhart River to Apudthama NP (CYPAL) | Apudthama NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 7 | Rest and explore | Apudthama NP (CYPAL) |
| Day 8 | Apudthama NP (CYPAL) to The Tip | Bamaga, Seisia, Umagico, Loyalty Beach |
| Day 9 | The Tip to Coen/Archer River | Coen or Archer River Roadhouse |
| Day 10 | Coen/Archer River to Mareeba/Cairns | |

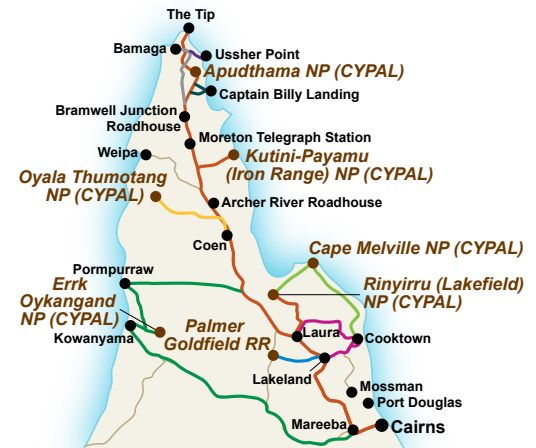


This page, clockwise from above:
 Hiking at Cape Melville *Eric Wason* © Qld Govt;
 Number plate tree at Bramwell Junction
Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld;
 Sunset at the Tip *Peter Lik* © Tourism and Events Qld

15-day 'Expedition'

Use the 10-day itinerary and choose 'add ons'.

| Destination | Extra time | Route | Camp at |
|--|------------|--|---|
| Cooktown | 2-3 days | Cairns/Mareeba to Cooktown, then onto Rinyirru (Lakefield) | Cooktown or Laura |
| Palmer Goldfield | 3-4 days | Cairns/Mareeba to Palmer Goldfield and Laura, then onto Lakefield | Palmer Goldfield RR and Laura |
| Oyala-Thumotang (Rokeyby) | 3-4 days | Coen to Oyala-Thumotang and return to Coen | Oyala-Thumotang NP (CYPAL) |
| Cape Melville | 4-5 days | Cairns/Mareeba via Cooktown to Cape Melville and onto Rinyirru | Cooktown and Cape Melville NP (CYPAL) |
| Overland Telegraph Track (OTT) | 3-5 days | Kutini-Payamu to Moreton Telegraph Station or Bramwell Junction Roadhouse, drive the OTT to Apudthama NP (CYPAL) | Moreton Telegraph Station or Bramwell Junction Roadhouse, and along the OTT |
| Captain Billy Landing | 2-3 days | Kutini-Payamu to Moreton Telegraph Station or Bramwell Junction Roadhouse and onto Captain Billy Landing | Moreton Telegraph Station or Bramwell Junction Roadhouse, and Captain Billy Landing |
| Ussher Point | 2-3 days | Apudthama NP (CYPAL), Eliot Falls to Ussher Point | Ussher Point (Apudthama NP (CYPAL)) |
| Thursday Island (TI) and Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) | 2-4 days | Ferry to TI; and/or explore NPA attractions such as Pajinka, Lockerbie rainforest, Lake Wicheura, Somerset ruins, Mutee Head and Jardine River mouth | Bamaga, Seisia, Umagico, Loyalty Beach or Punsand Bay |
| Errk-Oykangand (Alice-Mitchell) | 4-5 days | Cairns/Mareeba or Normanton to Kowanyama, Errk-Oykangand NP (CYPAL), Pormpuraaw and onto Musgrave Roadhouse | Errk-Oykangand NP (CYPAL) |



— OTT
 — Cape Melville
 — Oyala-Thumotang
 — PDR to The Tip
 — Cooktown
 — Captain Billy Landing
 — Ussher Point
 — Errk Oykangand
 — Palmer Goldfield





Birdwatching at Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) © Kerry Trapnell

What do you want to see and do?

Once you know how long you have, where you decide to go depends upon your interests. Are you a ‘birdo’ or keen fisher? Are you seeking escape or adventure? Use these special interest checklists to fine-tune your itinerary.

Great birdwatching

1. Watch migratory waders (black-winged stilts and sharp-tailed sandpipers) and waterbirds (diving ducks, black-necked storks, pelicans and magpie geese) at Keatings Lagoon CP.
2. View waterbirds (brolgas, sarus cranes, black-necked storks, magpie geese, comb-crested jacanas and ducks) in Catfish Waterhole and Red Lily Lagoon, and watch for star finches and honeyeaters in the grasslands of Nifold Plain in Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL).

3. View waterbirds (Pacific black ducks, radjah shelducks, royal spoonbills and sarus cranes) in the waterholes, spot palm cockatoos in the canopy above watercourses and see Australian bustards in the open woodlands of Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL).
4. Look for eclectus parrots and palm cockatoos in rainforest, watch metallic starlings congregate at Chilli Beach (September to April) and spotlight for Papuan frogmouths and owl-nightjars in rainforest at Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL).
5. Spot Torresian crows, red-winged parrots, rainbow lorikeets, rainbow bee-eaters, black butcherbirds, pied imperial-pigeons, palm cockatoos and the northern race of Australian brush-turkeys around Eliot Falls camping area in Apudthama NP (CYPAL).



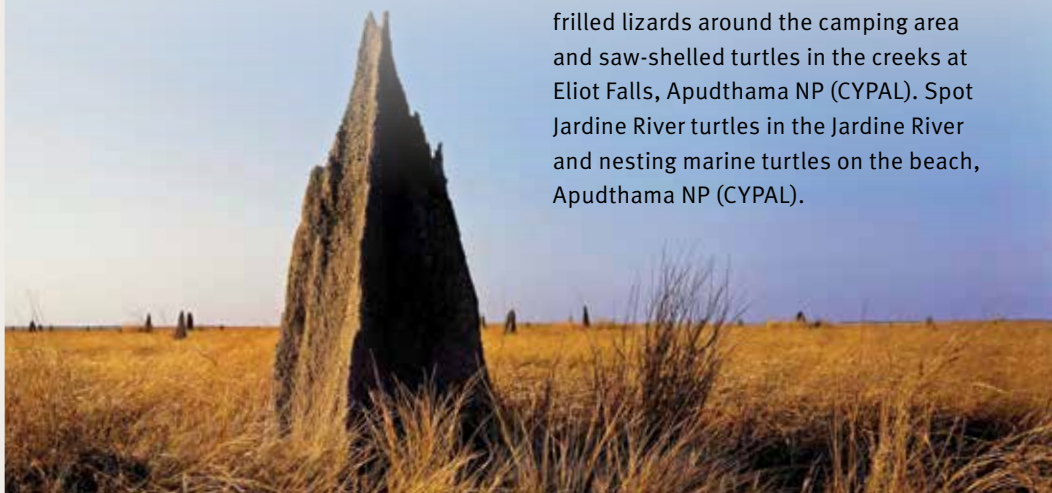
Green python © Jodie Bray

Top wildlife experiences

1. Spot estuarine crocodiles and freshwater crocodiles in rivers and waterholes such as Catfish and Old Faithfull waterholes in Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL).
2. View the giant ‘magnetic’ and ‘cathedral’ termite mounds dotted across Nifold Plain in Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL).
3. Watch agile wallabies and (more elusive) northern nail-tailed wallabies on grasslands at Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL).
4. Spotlight for green pythons, and southern common and common spotted cuscuses at Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL).
5. Spotlight for spiny knob-tailed geckos in woodlands, look for blue tongue and frilled lizards around the camping area and saw-shelled turtles in the creeks at Eliot Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL). Spot Jardine River turtles in the Jardine River and nesting marine turtles on the beach, Apudthama NP (CYPAL).



Eclectus parrot (above); Termite mounds, Nifold Plain, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) (right) © Qld Govt (above); © Tourism and Events Qld (right)



Best 'nature escapes'

1. Welcome Waterhole camping area, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
2. Day visit to Errk Oykangand NP (CYPAL); camp outside park near Shelfo Crossing
3. Camp sites in Coen River section, Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL)
4. Rainforest camping area, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL)
5. Ussher Point camping area, Apudthama NP (CYPAL).

Top spots for fishing

1. Wet a line where tidal salt water mixes with freshwater at Five Mile Creek, Saltwater Crossing and Basin Hole camping areas in Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL).
2. Fish from the beach from any of the Bathurst Bay camping areas, Cape Melville NP (CYPAL).
3. Drop a line in Horsetailer and Govenors waterholes in Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL).
4. Cast a line from the beach at Chilli Beach, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL).
5. Fish from the beach at Captain Billy Landing (north side of camping area).



Must-see history sites

1. Mining ruins, Palmer Goldfield RR
2. Old Laura homestead, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
3. Old Archer crossing, Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL)
4. Overland Telegraph Track and linesmen's hut, Apudthama NP (CYPAL).

Don't miss these historic sites outside our parks

- Musgrave Roadhouse (historic fortress telegraph station) and Moreton Telegraph Station
- Coen Heritage House and Mining Museum, Coen (in the historic Mein Telegraph Station)
- Lockhart River aerodrome and Portland Roads jetty (WWII sites and relics)
- Historic Somerset Beach settlement, Northern Peninsula Area.



Aboriginal cultural tour, Cooktown
© Tourism and Events Queensland

Aboriginal cultural sites

There are many Aboriginal cultural sites scattered throughout the peninsula—it is a living cultural landscape. These sites are presented (with signs) in national parks:

1. Kalkajaka (Black Mountain), Kalkajaka NP (CYPAL)
2. Mount Tozer, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL)
3. Nukakurra Lagoon walking track, Olkola NP (CYPAL).

Other places to learn about First Nations peoples cultures

- Split Rock rock art gallery and Quinkan Regional and Cultural Centre, Laura
- Wunthulpu Visitors Centre, Coen
- Lockhart River Art Centre, Lockhart River
- Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Island
- Torres Strait Heritage Museum, Horn Island.

Iconic destinations

It's hard to choose but this is our pick of the top 5 iconic places to visit:

1. Kalkajaka National Park (CYPAL)
2. Nifold Plain, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
3. Chilli Beach, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL)
4. Fruit Bat Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL)
5. The Tip of Cape York Peninsula.

Clockwise from above:
View over Captain Billy Landing
© Qld Govt;
Old Laura homestead,
Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
Adam Creed © Qld Govt;
Red Lily Lagoon, Rinyirru
(Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
Maxime Coquard
© Tourism and Events Qld;
Fruit Bat Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL)
Maxime Coquard
© Tourism and Events Qld



Be crocwise

Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).



Driving the Overland Telegraph Track
© Kerry Trapnell

Choose your route

Stay on the ‘straight and narrow’, following the Peninsula Developmental Road, or get off the beaten track and take a challenging 4WD route. Whichever way you go, it will be the adventure of a lifetime.

Bypass roads

Bamaga Road (Northern and Southern Bypass roads) offers an easier route to The Tip, avoiding many of the creek and river crossings of the Overland Telegraph Track.

PDR to The Tip

The Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) is the main access route into the peninsula. The road is sealed as far as Laura; past Laura the road is unsealed but graded, and has roadhouses conveniently spaced for fuel, food and rest areas. Your route to The Tip follows the PDR to Archer River, then continues on the Telegraph Road and Bamaga Road (bypass roads) to the Jardine River crossing into the Northern Peninsula Area, and the northern most tip of Australia.

PDR

The PDR follows the route of the historic Overland Telegraph Line (OTL) through central Cape York Peninsula before diverging west to Weipa, 50km past Archer River. The Telegraph Road continues along the OTL route to Bramwell Junction.

Musgrave Roadhouse

This historic fortress telegraph station, built in 1887, was part of the OTL. Today the roadhouse is an important stop for passing travellers, providing fuel, food, accommodation, camping and facilities.

| From/To | Via | Distance (approx. times) |
|---|---|--|
| Cairns to Cooktown | Mareeba and Lakeland Downs | 327km (4hr) |
| Cooktown to Laura | Lakeland Downs | 143km (1hr 45min) |
| Cairns to Cooktown (alternative) | Coastal route (Cape Tribulation) | 234km (allow 5–6hr to enjoy the scenery) |
| Laura to Lakefield ranger base, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) | PDR and Lakefield Road | 85km (1.5hr) |
| Lakefield ranger base, Rinyirru, to Musgrave | North via Lakefield Road South via Laura and PDR | 110km (2.5hr) 224km (3.5hr) |
| Laura to Musgrave (bypassing Rinyirru) | PDR | 139km (2hr) |
| Musgrave to Coen | PDR | 110km (1.5–2hr) |
| Coen to Oyala Thumotang NP (CYPAL) | PDR and Rokeby Road | 99–103km (2.5hr) to Coen River section, and further 47km (1–2hr) to Archer Bend |
| Coen to Archer River (bypassing Oyala Thumotang) | PDR | 66km (1hr) |
| Archer River to ‘3 ways’, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL) | PDR and Portland Roads Road | 133km (2.5hr), and further 4–6km to rainforest camping areas or 30km (50min) to Chilli Beach |
| ‘3 ways’ Kutini-Payamu to Moreton | Portland Roads Road, PDR and Telegraph Road | 184km (4hr) |
| Archer River to Moreton (bypassing Kutini-Payamu) | PDR | 123km (2–3hr) |
| Moreton to Bramwell Junction | Telegraph Road | 42km (45min) |
| Bramwell Junction to Eliot Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL) | Bamaga Road (Southern Bypass Road) | 127km (2–3hr) |
| Eliot Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL) to the Jardine River ferry | Bamaga Road (Northern Bypass Road) | 58km (1.5hr) |
| Jardine River ferry to Bamaga | Bamaga Road | 42km (45min) |
| Bamaga to The Tip | Lockerbie | 32km (1hr) |



Chilli Beach, Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL)
© Tourism and Events Qld

4WD adventure challenges

Follow in the footsteps (or wheel ruts) of many who have gone before, from the earliest explorers to present day adventurers, with these challenging 4WD routes.

Battle Camp Road from Cooktown to Old Laura

Once the historic route from Cooktown to the Palmer River Goldfield, this unsealed road passes Isabella Falls and crosses the Normanby River. Drive 38km (30min) out of Cooktown on Hope Vale Road, then turn onto Battle Camp Road and drive 73km (1.5hr) to Old Laura in southern Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL). This route can remain closed until June due to the crossing over the Normanby River.

Archer River Roadhouse

This favourite travellers' stop near the southern bank of the Archer River offers fuel, food, accommodation, camping and facilities. The nearby river bank is also a popular camping spot. Remember to be crocwise.

Old Coach Road from Palmer Goldfield to Laura

The Old Coach Road between Palmer Goldfield and Laura passes through rugged dry country and is only for experienced four-wheel drivers with high-clearance 4WD vehicles and recovery gear. It takes about 6–7hr to travel this challenging 80km track. To reach Palmer Goldfield RR, turn off the Mulligan Highway 67km north of Mount Carbine onto Whites Creek Road. Travel 71km (3hr) to Dog Leg Crossing on the Palmer River and enter the reserve. The camping area is about 12km from the entrance.

Cape Melville coastal route from Cooktown

Take the challenging coastal route from Cooktown to Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL) via the remote Cape Melville NP (CYPAL). This route is suitable only for experienced four-wheel drivers and requires a high-clearance 4WD vehicle with recovery gear. Carry adequate fuel—driving in low range on sandy sections of the road uses fuel quickly. The nearest fuel stop is Musgrave or Laura.

The Tip

From the car park, a walking track leads to the beach and over a bluff to a monument, a further short walk brings you onto the rock that is the northern-most tip of mainland Australia. It's time to celebrate—you've made it to The Tip!

Drive 220km (up to 12hr) from Cooktown via Wakooka Road. Take a rest at Starcke River boat ramp recreational area before continuing your journey to the camping areas at Bathurst Bay or Ninian Bay in Cape Melville NP (CYPAL). To continue onto Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL), drive 110km (3.5–5hr) from the camping areas at Bathurst Bay or Ninian Bay to Kalpowar Crossing via Wakooka Road.

Kowanyama-Pormpuraw Road to Errk Oykangand NP (CYPAL)

Visit this far-flung western Cape York park as an alternative (western) route into or out of the Cape.

Travel to Kowanyama along the Burke Developmental Road, driving 542km (8hr) from Mareeba or 360km (7hr) from Normanton. Contact Kowcamp on 0467 179 632 for advice before heading to the park.

Drive 32km (30min) from Kowanyama on the Kowanyama–Pormpuraaw Road to enter the park at Shelfo Crossing on the Mitchell River, a broad rock bar with fast-flowing water inhabited by estuarine crocodiles and sharks. Drive with extreme caution. The track continues for about 11km through the park to the Alice River crossing. From here, drive 83km (1.5hr) to Pormpuraaw on the Kowanyama–Pormpuraaw Road. From Pormpuraaw, drive 215km (3hr) east to Musgrave Roadhouse where your journey can continue on the PDR.

Frenchmans Track

If you are well-prepared for a true 4WD challenge, you may decide to tackle the difficult 100km (6hr) Frenchmans Track to or from Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) NP (CYPAL). This route is suitable only for experienced four-wheel drivers and requires a high-clearance 4WD vehicle with recovery gear. It is not recommended



© Tourism Tropical North Qld

for vehicles travelling alone, or towing trailers, or without snorkels or recovery gear. From the '3 ways' junction in Kutinti-Payamu drive 27km along Portland Roads Road, then turn onto Frenchmans Track and travel the difficult 52km to the junction with Telegraph Road. From here, drive a further 22km north to Moreton Telegraph Station.

Overland Telegraph Track (OTT) from Bramwell Junction to Jardine River

This iconic route is suitable only for experienced four-wheel drivers and requires a high-clearance 4WD vehicle with recovery gear. The track is not maintained, has numerous creek crossings, with informal camping spots near each crossing. Remnants of the historic telegraph line can be seen along the way.

From Bramwell Junction, the 80km southern section of the OTT extends to the junction with Bamaga Road (Northern Bypass Road) and takes about 6–8hr driving time. The 32km northern section of the OTT is even more difficult. From Eliot Falls to the Jardine River takes about 3–4hr driving time and involves several challenging creek crossings.

Overland Telegraph Line and track

The Overland Telegraph Line (OTL), completed in 1887, connected Laura with the tip of Cape York Peninsula, providing a communication link between Brisbane and Thursday Island. Fort-like telegraph stations were located along the telegraph line, which operated until 1964 and was dismantled in 1987. Today a rough and unmaintained track, known as the Overland Telegraph Track (OTT), follows the OTL route from Bramwell north to the Jardine River.



Aerial shot of Cooktown
© Tourism and Events Qld 

Parks around Cooktown

Feel the excitement build as you begin your journey discovering some of the diverse parks on sealed roads around historic Cooktown.

The imposing boulder pile of Kalkajaka (Black Mountain) heralds your proximity to Cooktown while the rugged rainforest-clad Mount Cook provides a scenic backdrop to the town. Keatings Lagoon offers a wetland refuge for waterbirds during the dry season.

Must Dos

- Gaze at stunning views over the Great Barrier Reef and Northern Wet Tropics world heritage areas from near the summit of **Mount Cook** on the 6km return walk. For a less strenuous walk, stroll 800m to the first lookout then return.
- Wander along the pleasant **Wawu Balgal Bubu Walk**, and from a snug bird hide watch waterbirds feeding in Keatings Lagoon, especially from May to October. Remember your binoculars and insect repellent.
- Feel awed by the mysterious looming boulders of **Kalkajaka (Black Mountain)** and the Aboriginal stories surrounding these lichen-blackened slopes. There is no access to the mountain—don't risk injury by venturing onto the boulder field.

Access

Open all year (but Keatings Lagoon can be inaccessible due to flooding between December and April).

Did you know?

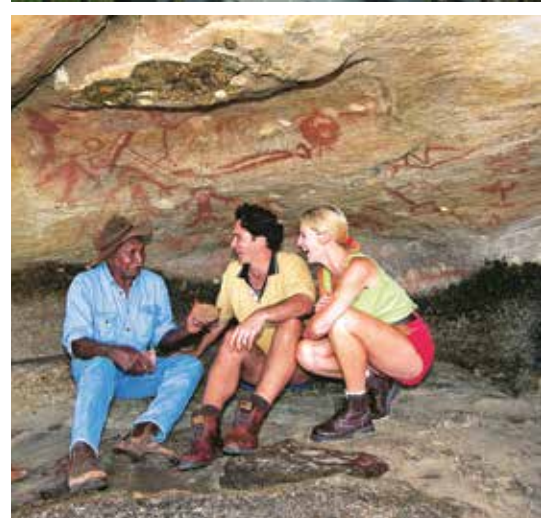
The granite boulder-strewn slopes of Kalkajaka (Black Mountain) seem barren but large fig trees draw water from deep within the mountain, and rainforest plants surround its base. Granite is usually pink-grey but these boulders appear black because of microscopic lichens and algae growing on exposed surfaces.

Cooktown—Laura discovery trails

A century after Lieutenant Cook repaired the HMS *Endeavour* on the river bank, 'Cooks Town' was established as a bustling port to service the Palmer River gold rush. Today, Cooktown offers travellers the chance to discover a colourful past and connect with local Aboriginal culture. Join one of the Aboriginal or historical tours around Cooktown. Visit Laura's Split Rock Aboriginal rock art galleries and Quinkan Regional and Cultural Centre, 2hr via sealed roads from Cooktown.

“ Take the time to rest at the gateway to Cape York Peninsula—Cooktown—where the bitumen ends and adventure begins.

Ranger Craig





Places to go

- 1 Wawu Balgal Babu walk**—easy, 1.4km (1hr) return, Keatings Lagoon CP, 5km south of Cooktown
- 2 Mount Cook summit track**—easy to difficult, 6km (4hr) return, Mount Cook NP, Hannam Street, Cooktown
- 3 Kalkajaka (Black Mountain) viewing area**—great boulder views, Kalkajaka NP (CYPAL), 25km south of Cooktown.




Safety

When walking, cover up in protective clothing and remember insect repellent.



Be crocwise

Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

 Keatings Lagoon; Mount Cook lookout; Cultural tour (opposite page from top down); Kalkajaka (Black Mountain) (this page).
Qld Govt (opposite page top and above); Tourism and Events Qld (opposite page below); Tourism Tropical North Qld (this page)



Waterbirds on lagoon, Rinyirru (Lakefield) NP (CYPAL)
Adam Creed © Qld Govt

Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park (CYPAL)

Feel like intrepid adventurers as you savour the iconic sights, and discover hidden treasures and a colourful history in this enormous national park.

This park is renowned for its large river systems—the North Kennedy, Normanby, Hann and Morehead rivers—with spectacular wetlands, floodplains clad in open woodlands, and vast grassland plains dotted with termite mounds and expanses of unique corypha palms.

The landscape has important Aboriginal cultural significance, containing sites associated with occupation, ceremonies and stories of ancestral spirits. This park is jointly managed by the Rinyirru (Lakefield) Land Trust and QPWS.

Must Dos

- Spend a relaxing day fishing for a big barra then share it around a campfire at night with friends.
- Capture a great photo as you watch the setting sun silhouette the termite mounds dotted over the grassy Nifold Plain.
- Take your binoculars to watch waterbirds feeding in the tranquil early mornings or late afternoons at Sweetwater Lake or Rarda-Ndolphin (Low Lake).
- Step back in time to the days of early European exploration and ‘gold fever,’ as you explore Old Laura, the original homestead for Laura cattle station, and one of the first on the Cape.

Access

Usually open from 1 June (south of Lakefield ranger base) and 1 July (north of Lakefield ranger base).

Fishing

You can fish in rivers and waterholes at all camping areas in the park, and in the marine waters of Princess Charlotte Bay, adjacent to the park. Canoes and kayaks are not allowed due to the presence of crocodiles. Limit boat speed to prevent bank erosion and water turbidity. Fishing regulations and marine park zoning restrictions apply (see page 27).

Places to camp

Kalpowar and Hann crossings camping areas

Large popular camping areas on river banks at Kalpowar and Hann crossings. Toilets provided.


Bush camping

Many secluded bush camping areas near scenic waterholes and along river banks. No facilities.

“ To see a croc, keep very quiet, park your car near the lagoon but not too close (don’t close the door as the noise will scare them off) and walk towards the lagoon, keeping your eyes on the banks where the crocs often bask.

Ranger Barry



 Horseshoe Lagoon (above);
Termite mounds of Nifold Plain (left)
© John Augusteyn (above);
Maxime Coquard © Tourism
and Events Qld (left)



Legend

- National park (CYPAL)
- Aboriginal freehold land
- Environmental reserve

Places to visit

- 1** **2** **Old Laura Homestead and Breeza Homestead**—historic European sites
- 3** **Catfish Waterhole**—great wildlife watching (turtles and crocs)
- 4** **Kalpowar discovery walk**—easy 4km (1.5hr) return ramble along the Normanby River
- 5** **Red Lily and White Lily lagoons**—picturesque carpets of pink lotus lilies and white water lilies
- 6** **Rarda-Ndolphin (Low Lake)**—important spiritual and ceremonial place for Traditional Custodians, also great birdwatching
- 7** **Sweetwater Lake**—excellent birdwatching.

Distances (approx. times)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Old Laura to New Laura | 25km (40min) |
| New Laura to Lakefield ranger base | 34km (40min) |
| Lakefield ranger base to Hann Crossing | 26km (45min) |
| Hann Crossing to Saltwater Crossing | 31km (1hr) |

! Safety
 Be alert for snakes when exploring the park. Wear protective clothing and footwear, use lights at night and keep tents closed at all times.

! Be crocwise
 Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

Did you know?

Before becoming a national park in 1979, this area comprised the Lakefield and Laura cattle stations, first established in the late 1870s.



Chilli Beach at dawn
© Tourism and Events Qld

Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park (CYPAL)

Unwind and immerse yourself in nature in this exceptional park famed for iconic wildlife, rich in Aboriginal cultural significance and with a unique war history.

Featuring the rugged heath-clad Tozer Range, lush lowland tropical rainforest (part of the largest remnant in Australia) and long sweeping beaches, this park provides a refuge for wildlife found only in northern Cape York Peninsula and New Guinea.

The area is rich in Aboriginal cultural significance, with story places, ceremonial sites and occupation places dotted across the landscape. The park is jointly managed by the Northern Kuuku Ya'u Kanthanampu Aboriginal Corporation Land Trust and QPWS.

Must Dos

- Find hidden meanings in the heath-clad landscape of Mount Tozer through the Aboriginal story of Kutini (cassowary).
- Let the sea air revive you as you wander along the white quartz sands of wind-swept Chilli Beach, relishing the remoteness of this ancient coastline.
- Feel the thrill of wildlife-spotting for the 'big four'—cuscus, green python, eclectus parrot and palm cockatoo—in their lowland rainforest refuge.
- Enjoy the evening spectacle of metallic starlings flying overhead at Chilli Beach (September to April).

Access

Usually from July to November.

Fishing

You can fish from the beach at Chilli Beach; fishing regulations and marine park zoning restrictions apply (see page 27). Fishing is not allowed in any freshwater rivers or creeks within the national park (CYPAL).

Places to camp

Rainforest, Cooks Hut and Gordon Creek camping areas

Shady rainforest camp sites on the banks of the Claudie River and Gordon Creek. Toilet provided at Cooks Hut.

Chilli Beach camping area

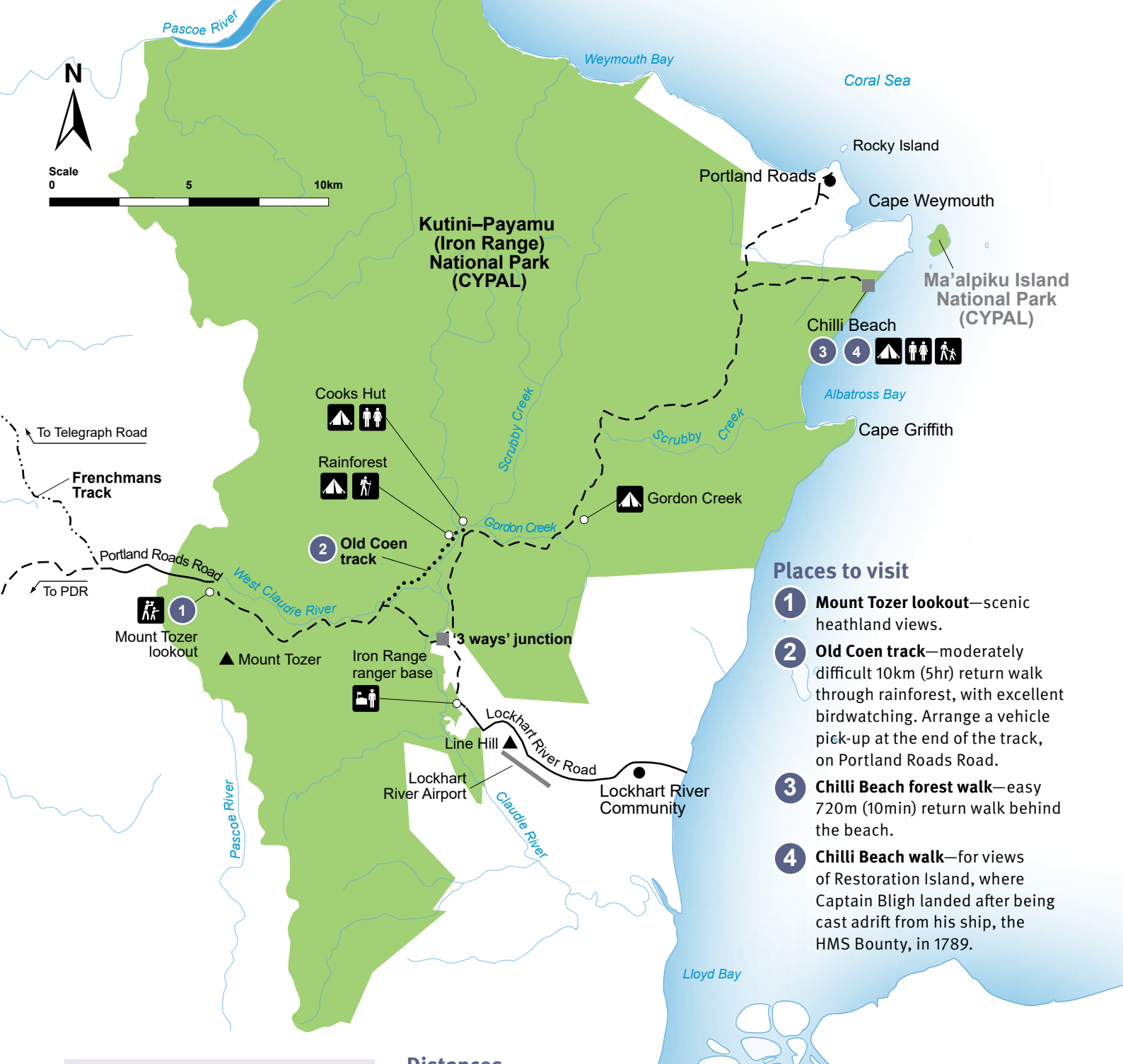
Shady and partly-shady camp sites behind the beach (some protected by coastal plants; others exposed to wind). Toilets provided. **Popular site—book well in advance.**

Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor made landfall here in mid-March 2019. Damage to the landscape was extensive—recovery may take many years.



Heath-clad foothills of Mount Tozer (top); Old Coen track (above); Chilli Beach starlings (opposite page).

© Tourism and Events Qld (top);
© John Augusteyn; (above and opposite page)



Places to visit

- 1 Mount Tozer lookout**—scenic heathland views.
- 2 Old Coen track**—moderately difficult 10km (5hr) return walk through rainforest, with excellent birdwatching. Arrange a vehicle pick-up at the end of the track, on Portland Roads Road.
- 3 Chilli Beach forest walk**—easy 720m (10min) return walk behind the beach.
- 4 Chilli Beach walk**—for views of Restoration Island, where Captain Bligh landed after being cast adrift from his ship, the HMS Bounty, in 1789.

Safety
Take care if driving on the beach near creek mouths and between the tides where quicksand can develop.

Be crocwise
Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

Distances

| | |
|---|---|
| '3 ways' junction to Iron Range ranger base | 2.5km via Lockhart River Road |
| '3 ways' to Lockhart River community | 11km via Lockhart River Road |
| '3 ways' to rainforest camping areas | 3.9km (Rainforest), 4.8km (Cooks Hut), 5.5km (Gordon Creek) via Portland Roads Road |
| '3 ways' to Chilli Beach camping area | 23km via Portland Roads Road to Chilli Beach turnoff then 6km to the camping area |
| Chilli Beach turnoff to Portland Roads township | 6km via Portland Roads Road |


Did you know?

The Iron Range airbase was constructed in 1942. American 90th Bomb Group, known as the 'Jolly Rogers', described it as the worst airfield they were ever posted at during the war. Difficult conditions were made worse during the monsoonal rains and possibly contributed to several military aircraft crashes in the area. 'The strips were a disaster... muddy and flooded most of the time.'

W. Rollins, 197th Coast Artillery (AA) Regiment.





Eliot Falls, Apudthama NP (CYPAL)
Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld 

Apudthama National Park (CYPAL)

Be astonished by the sudden abundance of fresh water, soak up the beauty of the heath-clad landscape, and delve into the area’s colourful history in our northern-most parks.

These parks are a vast remote wilderness in an ancient sandstone landscape, dominated by the mighty Jardine River with its many small streams and swamps. Dry heaths, coastal heaths, grasslands, rainforest and woodlands are home to diverse wildlife, including some found nowhere else.

The area is a living cultural landscape, containing story-places and story-beings, and occupation and ceremony sites. The park is jointly managed by QPWS and the Aboriginal Traditional Owners from the Atambaya, Angkamuthi, Yadhaykenu, Gudang and Wuthathi language and social groups.

“ Take up the challenge of driving the Overland Telegraph Track, if you are well-prepared. You can avoid the deep crossing at Scrubby Creek by taking Bamaga Road (Northern Bypass) into Eliot Falls.

Ranger Stuart

Places to camp

Captain Billy Landing camping area

Camp sites beside the beach. Toilet provided.

Eliot Falls camping area

Spacious camp sites in woodland between Canal and Eliot creeks. Toilets provided. **Popular site—book well in advance.**

North and South Jardine River camping areas

Sandy sites on the banks of the Jardine River. No facilities.

Ussher Point camping area

Camp sites close to beach and cliffs. No facilities.

Must Dos

- Wash away dust in crystal-clear waters at Twin Falls at Eliot Falls camping area, a surprising oasis in a vast open savannah.
- Discover fascinating plant life—sundews and pitcher plants on creek edges, banksias and grevilleas in dry heath, towering cypress, and sedge swamps in low-lying areas.
- Camp beneath clear starry skies and feel a connection with the ‘sandbeach people’ who lived here for thousands of years and knew Eliot Falls as ‘Yaranjangu’, a story place.

Access

Usually from June to November.

Fishing

Fish in the Jardine River, except for the section of the river (and its tributaries) from the old vehicle crossing (on the Overland Telegraph Track) to a point 5km upstream. You can also fish from the beaches in marine waters adjacent to the parks and reserve. Fishing regulations and marine park zoning restrictions apply (see page 27). Fishing is not permitted in Eliot Creek.



Tiny carnivorous sundew
© Queensland Government 

Did you know?

Early European explorers called this area the ‘wet desert’ because it had abundant freshwater but lacked food for horses and cattle.



Places to visit

- 1 **Captain Billy Landing**— remote coastline featuring sea caves and white sand beaches
- 2 **Fruit Bat Falls**— easy 500m (10min) return stroll on a boardwalk, with swimming access
- 3 **Twin Falls and Eliot Falls**— easy 550m (15min) return walk, with swimming access at Twin Falls
- 4 **'The Saucepan'**— easy 670m (15min) return walk to Eliot Creek, with swimming access.



Safety

At Eliot Falls, water levels can rise rapidly and there may be slippery rocks and submerged objects.



Be crocwise

Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

Distances (approx. times)

| | |
|---|--|
| Bramwell Junction to Atambaya (Heathlands) ranger base | 56km via Bamaga Rd (Southern Bypass Rd) to turn off, then 13km west on ranger base track |
| Bramwell Junction to Captain Billy Landing | 93km (2.5hr) via Bamaga Road (Southern Bypass Road) and Captain Billy Landing track |
| Captain Billy Landing to Fruit Bat Falls sign | 27m along Captain Billy Landing track, then 53km (2hr) along Bamaga Road (Southern Bypass Road) |
| Atambaya (Heathlands) ranger base to Fruit Bat Falls sign | 13km on ranger base track, then 64km along Bamaga Road (Southern Bypass Road) |
| Fruit Bat Falls sign to Eliot Falls | 14km north via Bamaga Road to Mistake Creek track turnoff, then 14km to Eliot Falls camping area OR 8km via OTT (with deep crossing on Scrubby Creek) |
| Eliot Falls to South Jardine River camping area | 32km (3–4hr) north via the OTT |
| Bamaga Road (Northern Bypass Road)/OTT junction to North Jardine River camping area | 50km via Bamaga Road to ferry crossing, then further 11km |
| Bamaga Road (Northern Bypass Road)/OTT junction to Ussher Point camping area | 50km via Bamaga Road to ferry crossing, further 18km north on Bamaga Road, then 60km east to the coast. Travel time (4–5hr). This track is suitable only for experienced four-wheel drivers and requires a high-clearance 4WD vehicle with recovery gear. Camper trailers are not recommended. |



Twin Falls (top); Captain Billy Landing (above)
 Maxime Coquard © Tourism and Events Qld (top);
 © Qld Govt (above)



Palmer goldfield ruins
Nick Smith © Qld Govt

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve

Discover fascinating relics of North Queensland's biggest gold rush, reminders of the region's prosperous and colourful history.

Must Dos

- Step into an exciting past when fortunes were won and lost as you explore the mine ruins.
- Wander around the Chinese cemetery and Maytown ruins to imagine life as it was here 130 years ago.
- Swap yarns around the campfire about the hardships endured by the diggers on the Palmer River.

Old mines, rusting machinery and traces of the once-thriving Maytown township, dating from the Palmer River gold rush of 1873, are scattered across this landscape. Today the reserve is managed to protect the area's rich cultural heritage.

Access

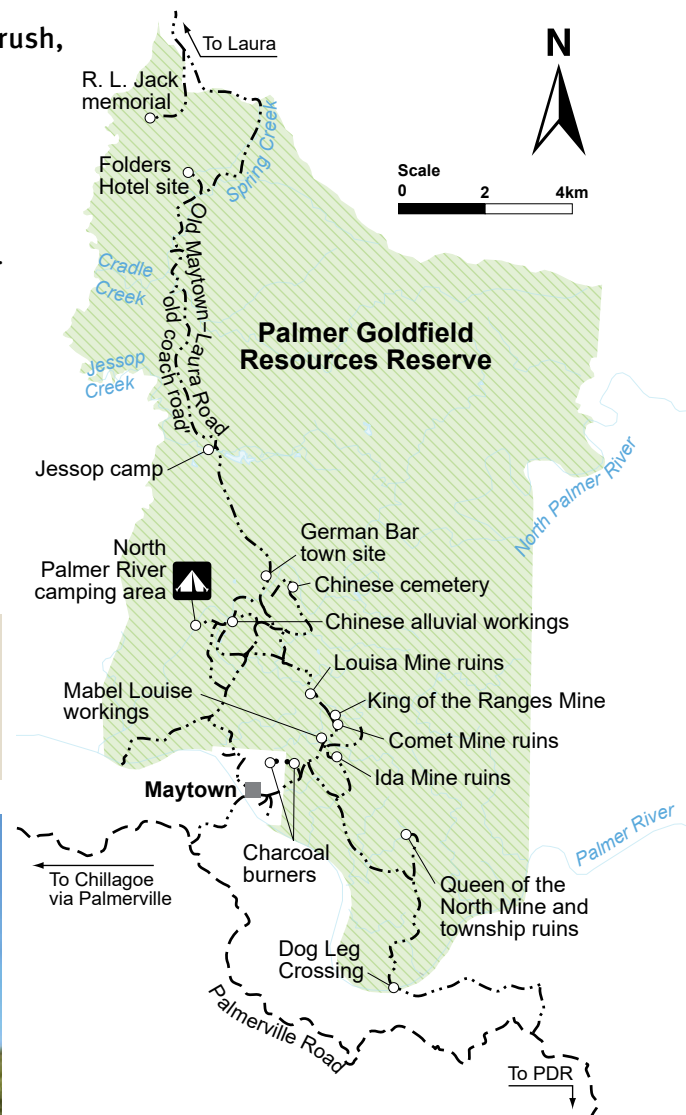
Usually from April to November.

Places to camp

Remote camping area on the southern bank of North Palmer River. No facilities.

Did you know?

The 'old coach road' to Laura was the route to the port of Cooktown.



Safety

When exploring, stay on signed tracks marked on the map and don't venture into mining leases. Beware of previously mined areas, as open and collapsed shafts are common.



Mining relics
© Old Govt



Shelfo Crossing on the Mitchell River
Eric Wason © Qld Govt

Errk Oykangand National Park (CYPAL)

Journey into western Cape York Peninsula to experience the ‘Gulf country’, and discover a landscape of incredible contrasts.

Bounded by 2 mighty rivers, the Alice and Mitchell, this savanna landscape is inundated with nutrient-rich floodwaters during the wet season, as rivers spill over their banks. The park is jointly managed by the Errk Oykangand National Park Land Trust and QPWS.

Must Dos

- Picnic on the banks of the Mitchell River near Shelfo Crossing and spot a surprising variety of birdlife.
- Find out about this park’s traditional significance for the Uw Oykangand people (‘people of the outside waterholes’).
- Watch for emus, Australian bustards and eastern grey kangaroos in the open savanna country.

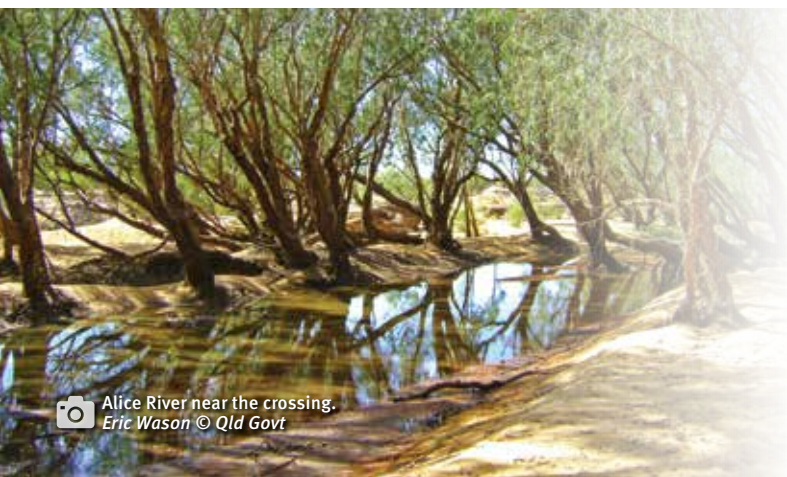
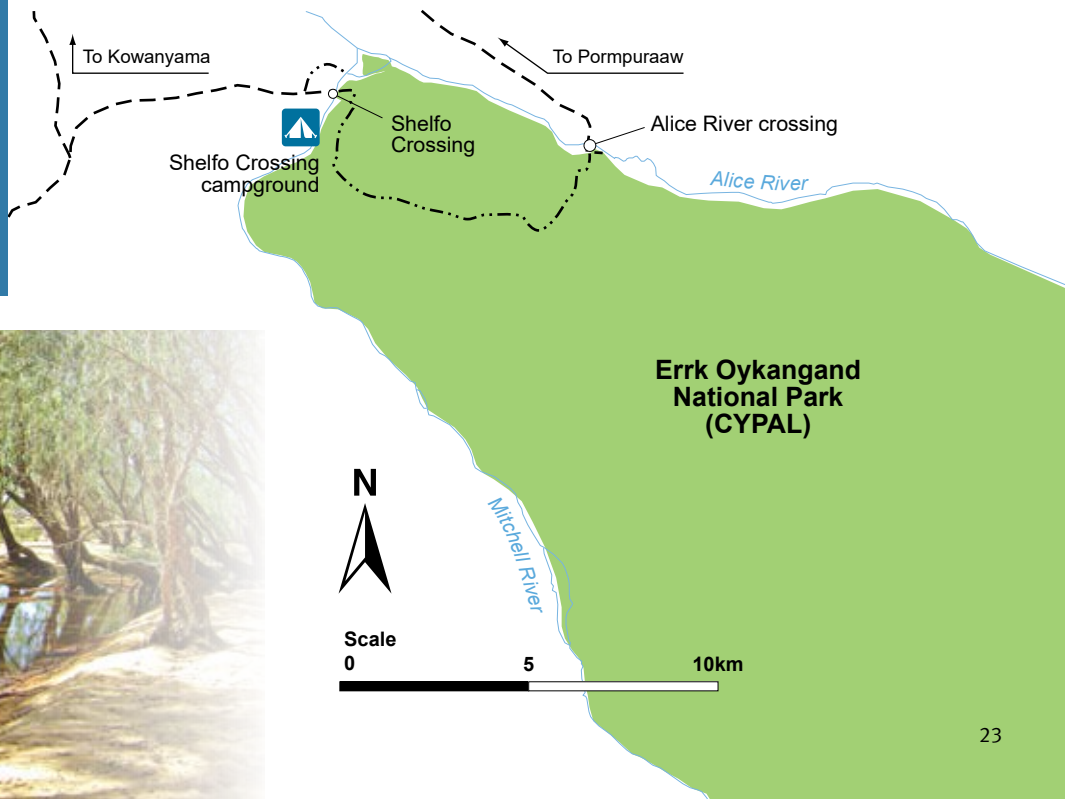
Access
Usually from August/September to October. Before you set out, contact Kowcamp on 0467 179 632 for advice.

Places to camp
Camp outside the park in the campground near Shelfo Crossing. Bookings are essential. Contact Kowcamp on 0467 179 632 for advice. Camping is not permitted inside the park.

Did you know?
The hard dry cracked ground of the savanna becomes an inland sea in the wet season.

Safety
Ensure you are well prepared and self-sufficient with adequate food, water, fuel and basic vehicle repair equipment.

Be crocwise
Think twice—you’re in croc country (see page 27).



Alice River near the crossing.
Eric Wason © Qld Govt



Cape Melville boulders
Adam Creed © Qld Govt

Cape Melville National Park (CYPAL)

Tackle corrugations, washouts and tidal creeks to reach this rugged remote park, with a spectacularly diverse landscape.

Massive tumbled boulders of Melville Range, sandstone escarpments of Altanmoui Range and a high diversity of plants and animals characterise this park, which is jointly managed by the Cape Melville, Flinders and Howick Islands Aboriginal Corporation and QPWS.

Must Dos

- Feel the adrenaline of a true 4WD challenge to reach this far-flung park!
- Throw a line in from the beach to catch dinner then enjoy a stunning sunset on the sands at Cape Melville, cool drink in hand.
- Walk up to the Mahina monument (near Granite camping area) and take a moment to contemplate the many lives lost during Cyclone Mahina in 1899.

Safety
Travel with another vehicle, and be self-sufficient in food, water and fuel, vehicle spare parts and recovery equipment. Reliable communications are essential and personal locator beacons (PLBs) are recommended.

Be crocwise
Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

Access

Usually August to November. Suitable only for high-clearance 4WD vehicles and experienced drivers; not suitable for trailers, caravans or campervans.

Wakooka Outstation to Bathurst Bay and Ninian Bay camping areas: 40km (2.5–3hr).

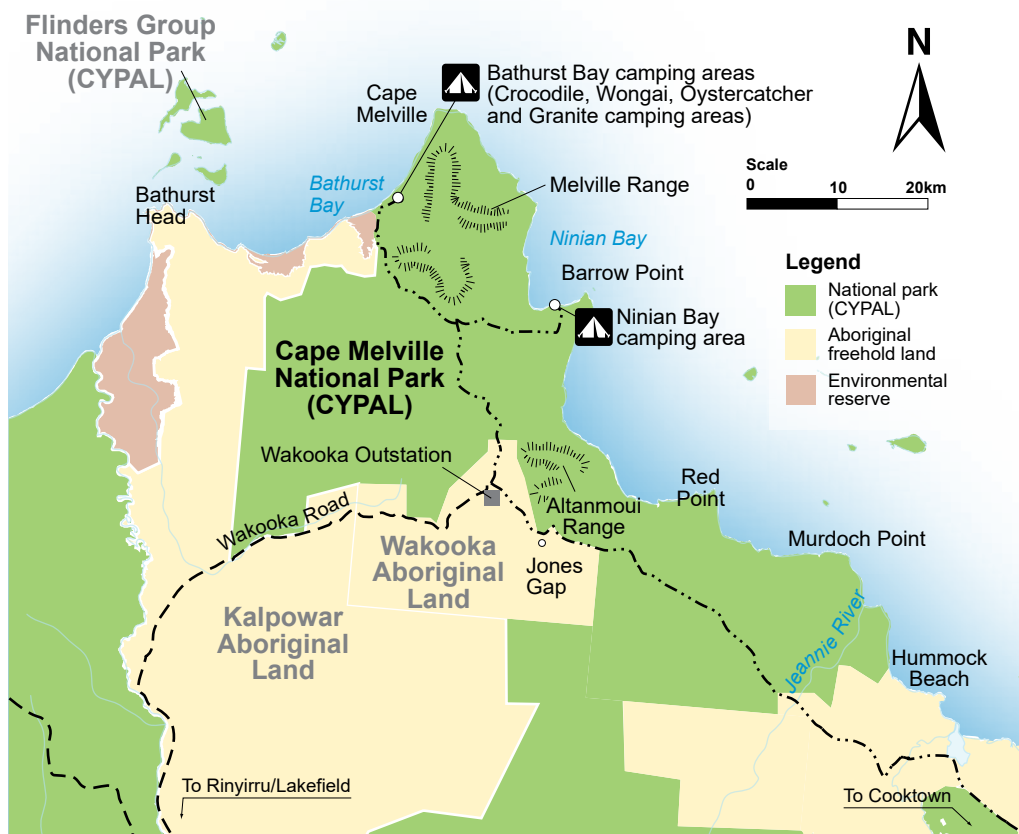
Fishing

You can fish from the beach, and in all the creeks and rivers in this park. Fisheries regulations and marine park zoning restrictions apply (see page 27).

Places to camp

Bathurst Bay & Ninian Bay camping areas

Extremely remote camping areas behind the beach, bounded by tidal creeks or mangroves. No facilities.





Paperbarks along Coen River
Adam Creed © Qld Govt

Oyala Thumotang National Park (CYPAL)

Venture westwards to this sprawling park where the Archer and Coen rivers meet, and feel immersed in a vast and isolated landscape.

Eucalypt woodlands and melaleuca swamps stretch from the McIlwraith Range foothills to the junction of the Archer and Coen rivers. This park is a living cultural landscape and is jointly managed by the Oyala Thumotang Land Trust and QPWS.

🏠 Places to camp

Coen River and Archer Bend sections
Secluded remote bush camp sites beside waterholes, lagoons and rivers.
No facilities.

🚗 Access

Usually July to November.

Park entrance to Coen River and Langi sections: 74–78km (2hr); park entrance to Archer Bend section: 125km (3–4hr).

🎣 Fishing

Fish in all creeks and rivers in the park except Peach Creek (east of the PDR). Governors and Horsetailer waterholes have boat access for hand-launching small boats. Fishing regulations apply (see page 27).

⚠️ Safety

Ensure you are well prepared and self-sufficient with adequate food, water, fuel and basic vehicle repair equipment.

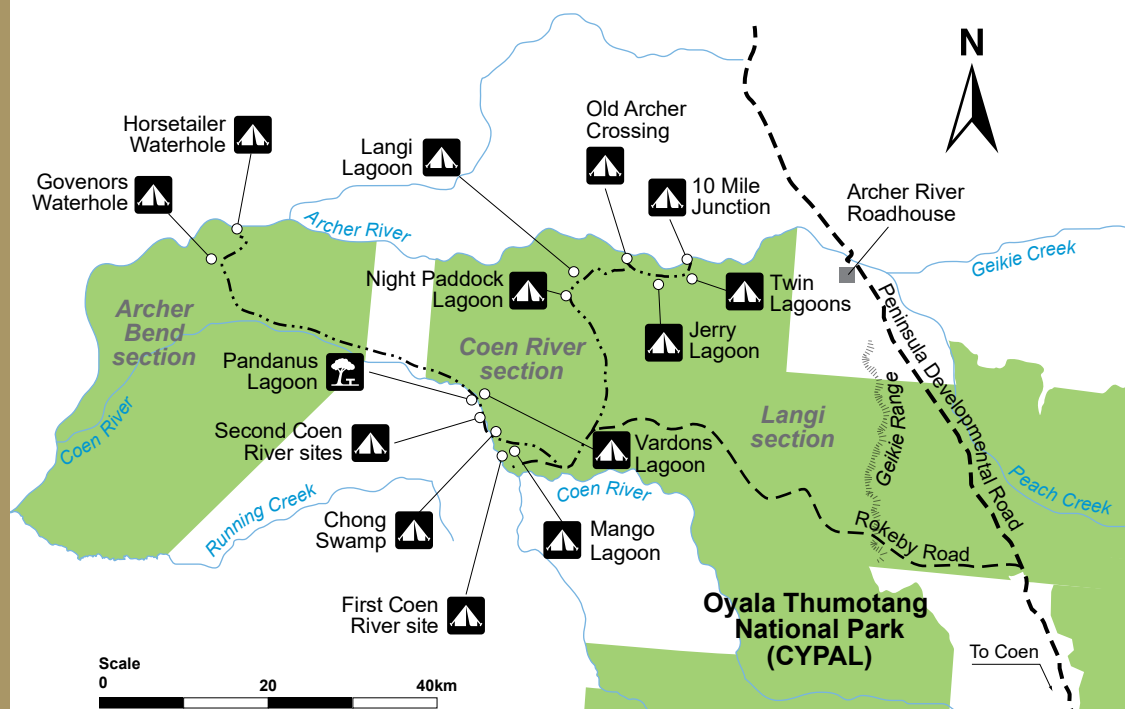


🐊 Be crocwise

Think twice—you're in croc country (see page 27).

Must Dos

- Discover river banks fringed with rainforest and paperbarks, and lily-clad lagoons, such as Pandanus Lagoon, fenced to exclude feral pigs.
- Spot the iconic palm cockatoo perched in forest along the river banks and watch waterbirds on the lagoons.
- Explore the far western (and most remote) end of the park, Archer Bend, where the floodplain of the Archer River is 8km wide.
- Visit the Old Archer Crossing, a historical river crossing that was once the main route to northern Cape York Peninsula.





Creek crossing
© Kerry Trapnell

Journey with confidence

Be informed

Alcohol restrictions

Many communities on the Cape have restrictions on carrying/possessing alcohol. Visit qld.gov.au/firstnations/community-alcohol-restrictions for more information.

Rubbish disposal

Cape York Peninsula is remote and you will not find bins in national parks or in council areas. It is your responsibility to pack, carry and dispose appropriately the rubbish you bring with you. There are waste disposal facilities (cages) at Coen, Archer River and Moreton, and waste stations at Cooktown, Lakeland, Laura and Portland Roads. Visit North Queensland Councils' lawmac.org.au for an interactive map of waste disposal facilities.

Black water disposal

If you are travelling with a portable toilet, dispose of toilet waste at the black water dump points in Cooktown, Coen, Weipa and Seisia.

Using generators

In some parks, you can use generators that operate at a noise level less than 65dB(A) when measured at a distance of 7m from the generator (see page 2). When booking your camp site, remember to check if generators are permitted in your selected camping area and if operating times are specified.

Quarantine

The Quarantine Inspection Station at Coen will inspect all south-bound traffic for

damaged or diseased fruit and vegetables. Visit daf.qld.gov.au for details.

Ferry services

For the Jardine River ferry, contact Jardine Ferry Roadhouse on 07 4069 1369. Ferry hours are 8am–6pm. Fees apply.

For Thursday Island (TI) ferry, contact Peddells TI Tours on 07 4069 1551. Fees apply.

Be safe

Care on the road

Local road conditions vary so be prepared for constantly-changing road surfaces. Expect corrugations, wheel ruts, deep sand, bulldust, rough and rocky sections, slippery gravel and wet surfaces.

- Slow down when visibility is obscured by dust and avoid travelling in the dust raised by another vehicle.
- Watch out for animals (wildlife and stock) and oncoming vehicles. Move to the left and slow down or stop when a vehicle approaches.
- Avoid taking risks at flooded crossings. Remember—if it's flooded, forget it.
- Consider operating hours of roadhouses, shops and ferries and plan your stops in advance. Fill your fuel tanks at every opportunity—driving on rough roads in low gear uses more fuel than normal driving conditions.
- If you break down, always stay with your vehicle until help arrives.
- Travel with another vehicle where possible and make sure someone else knows your itinerary.

What are CYPAL parks?

Most national parks on the peninsula are now called 'national park (CYPAL)' and some have new names. A new class of protected area has been created for Cape York Peninsula in recognition of important Aboriginal cultural values—'national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)'. This change allows national parks (and other lands) to become Aboriginal land that is jointly-managed as a national park (CYPAL). Most national parks on Cape York Peninsula are now jointly managed by the Aboriginal Traditional Owners, represented by a land trust or corporation, and QPWS. The name changes recognise the parks' cultural values.

Road conditions

Road conditions vary dramatically throughout the season, and can change rapidly, depending upon weather conditions.

- Visit cook.qld.gov.au/services/roads for up-to-date road conditions.
- The Department of Transport and Main Roads website is also useful. Visit qldtraffic.qld.gov.au or phone 13 19 40.



Be responsible

Fishing

Fishing regulations apply to all fishing and collecting in national and marine parks. For details visit Fisheries Queensland at fisheries.qld.gov.au. All waters adjacent to coastal national parks are protected within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park. Visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority at gbrmpa.gov.au for marine park zoning maps and fishing information.

Caring for parks

- Avoid disturbing animals and plants.
- Leave your pets at home.
- Don't feed wildlife or leave food or scraps around camp sites or day-use areas.
- Light campfires responsibly in existing fire rings.
- Avoid the spread of weeds by checking clothing and equipment regularly for seeds. Use the vehicle wash-down facilities at Lakeland Downs.
- Pack and carry your rubbish for dumping at waste disposal sites.
- Don't use chainsaws, firearms or quad bikes.
- Don't place rubbish or contents of chemical toilet tanks in the toilets.
- Camp only in the sites provided.
- Minimise your use of soaps and detergents.
- Where toilets are not provided, use a trowel to bury human waste and toilet paper at least 15cm deep and 100m away from camp sites, tracks and watercourses.



Emergencies

Dial 000 (Triple Zero) with a digital or satellite mobile phone.

“ Thanks for helping us look after our parks.

Cape York Peninsula QPWS Rangers and CYPAL Rangers

QPWS and Rinyirru CYPAL rangers
Maxime Coquard © Qld Govt



Be crocwise


Think twice—Cape York Peninsula is crocodile country


- Expect crocodiles in **ALL** north Queensland waterways, even if there is no warning sign.
- Just because you can't see a crocodile doesn't mean there is not one close by.
- Crocs can lunge from the water's edge—they are ambush predators and you may not see them. Stand back from the water when fishing or cast netting. Wash dishes and prepare food well away from the water's edge.
- Camp at least 2m above the high water mark and at least 50m from the water's edge. Crocodiles have attacked people in tents pitched too close to the water.
- Leave the lure—people have been attacked while recovering a fishing lure.
- Bin your food and fish scraps—don't leave food, fish scraps or bait near the water, around your camp site or at a boat ramp. Crocs are attracted by an easy meal.
- Don't be the bait. Keep your arms and legs inside your boat at all times when fishing.
- Your boat is your barrier. Keep the boat between yourself and the water when launching or retrieving it.

Estuarine crocodile in waterhole
Adam Creed © Qld Govt




Further information

 qld.gov.au/NationalParks

 qld.gov.au/Camping

 qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts
(access, closures and conditions)

 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

 [qldnationalparks](https://www.facebook.com/qldnationalparks)

 [@QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks); [#QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks)



Scan to check
park alerts

This brochure is also available online at qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures